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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 68/NO. 2 JANUARY 19, 2004

INSIDE

Preface to 'Imperialism's march toward fascism and war' in Greek

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Utah miners plan tour in California to win support

Strikers at Co-Op mine to meet with unionists in Bay Area

BY FRANK MILLER

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Striking workers at the Co-Op coal mine here are launching their first speaking tour outside Utah to win support in their battle for union recognition. Over the past few weeks, solidarity with the miners' battle has widened in many parts of the country.

The San Jose chapter of the Labor Council on Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) recently contacted the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) district offices in Price, Utah, and invited the Utah miners to the California Bay Area to speak about their union fight.

"We're finding a lot of enthusiasm and interest in the struggle of the Co-Op miners in Utah. People want to know how they're fighting as immigrant workers," said Rick Trujillo, president of the LCLAA chapter in San Jose, in an interview.

Seventy-five coal miners, almost all of them Mexican, are involved in an un-

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Militant/James Vincent

Edwin Rosales, a union pipefitter and one of supporters of Co-Op coal strike who traveled from Los Angeles to Huntington, Utah, hands bag of sugar to miner Gonzalo Salazar. Solidarity messages and contributions to the strikers have picked up in recent weeks.

U.S. mad cow case: gov't priority is market share, not food safety

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The first case of "mad cow" disease in the United States has sent officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scrambling to assure buyers abroad and consumers at home that U.S. beef is safe. To that end Ann Veneman, U.S. secretary of agriculture, announced a package of new rules for the feeding and slaughter of cattle bound for human consumption.

The incident has put a spotlight on health standards in the $175 billion beef industry in the United States. It has also highlighted the U.S. trade offensive against Canada and other countries.

Mad cow disease, or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), is a progressive neurological disease in cattle that is fatal. People can contract a variant of the illness, known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, by eating beef products made from the brain, spinal cord tissue, or intestine of cattle.

Among the new USDA measures are a prohibition on the slaughter of "downer cows"—those that cannot stand or walk due to illness or injury.

Previously, downers—200,000 a year—were slaughtered and stamped "approved." The meat would be sent to market while the brain and spinal cord would be tested for diseases.

"In the last year we have tested 20,526 head of cattle for BSE," Veneman declared in a December 23 news conference. "Our surveillance and detection program is

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Washington uses quake relief offer to renew pressure on Iranian gov't

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In the wake of the devastating earthquake on December 26 that leveled the Iranian city of Bam and killed up to one-half of its population, Washington has coupled skimpy offerings of aid with renewed pressure on Tehran to renounce its alleged development of nuclear weapons and sponsorship of "terrorist" groups in the Middle East.

On December 29, seven U.S. military cargo planes carrying 50 tons of medical equipment and other supplies landed near Bam, the first time in 25 years that such aircraft have been allowed onto that country's soil. Some 80 U.S. medical and other personnel have set up a field hospital. U.S. treasury secretary John Snow also announced the temporary easing of a 25-year ban on U.S. firms and individuals transferring funds to Iran, asserting that "getting aid to those so greatly affected by this devastating earthquake is a top priority" for the U.S. government. Washington broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in the months following the 1979 popular revolution that overthrew the U.S.-installed monarchy there.

"What we're doing in Iran," said U.S. president George Bush January 1, "is we're showing the Iranian people the American people care, that we've got great compassion for human suffering." He then listed Washington's oft-repeated demands: "The Iranian government must listen to the voices of those who long for freedom, must turn over Al Qaeda that are in their custody, and must abandon their nuclear weapons program."

The Japanese government said December 29 that it would send a pair of military aircraft to transport aid to the ruined city. The governments of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have shipped search-and-rescue teams

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Mitch Gettle/U.S. Air Force via Getty Images

U.S. military cargo plane is loaded with supplies bound for town of Bam, Iran. This is first time the U.S. government has landed such aircraft on Iranian soil since Iran's 1979 popular revolution.

New Jersey immigrants defend right to work in face of attacks

BY RÓGER CALERO

FREEHOLD, New Jersey—Immigrant day laborers here have won support in their fight to assert their right to seek work in face of a chauvinist campaign waged by big-business politicians and ultrarightists.

In the last couple of months the anti-immigrant forces have stepped up their campaign against these workers, who are picked up at street corners by construction and landscaping contractors. In November the local town council voted unanimously to exclude these workers as of January 1 from an area used for these purposes, known as the "muster zone." This was done through a city ordinance that threatens "loiterers"—along with "horn-blowers" and those accused of obstruction—with a fine of $500 and 30 days in jail.

Local authorities have threatened to hand over to immigration cops those undocumented workers arrested under this ordinance. Freehold is home to a growing community of workers from Latin America, mostly from Mexico but also from Argen-

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Contributions to the $150,000 HQ Building Fund accelerate

Published below is an appeal, issued January 5, for contributions to help finance the building of a new Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center in New York. It is signed by Joel Britton, who along with Arrin Hawkins, Janice Prescott, and Martín Koppel is a co-director of the fund.

Dear Friend,

We are appealing to supporters around the world to help us in raising the more than $150,000 that will be necessary to construct the premises in the heart of the New York City's Garment District, where a new Pathfinder bookstore and showroom distribution center will be located. We urge you to contribute generously to the campaign, which concludes January 31.

We have had a strong initial response to this special one-time January 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal, which was launched at a public meeting in New York on December 14. To date, nearly $125,000 has been pledged with $53,000 collected.

Those who are contributing to the appeal know what it will mean to have an attractive and well-stocked bookstore in the center of New York. This bookstore address, 307 West 36th Street, 10th Floor North, New York, NY 10018 is now the address for Pathfinder Press that appears in each one

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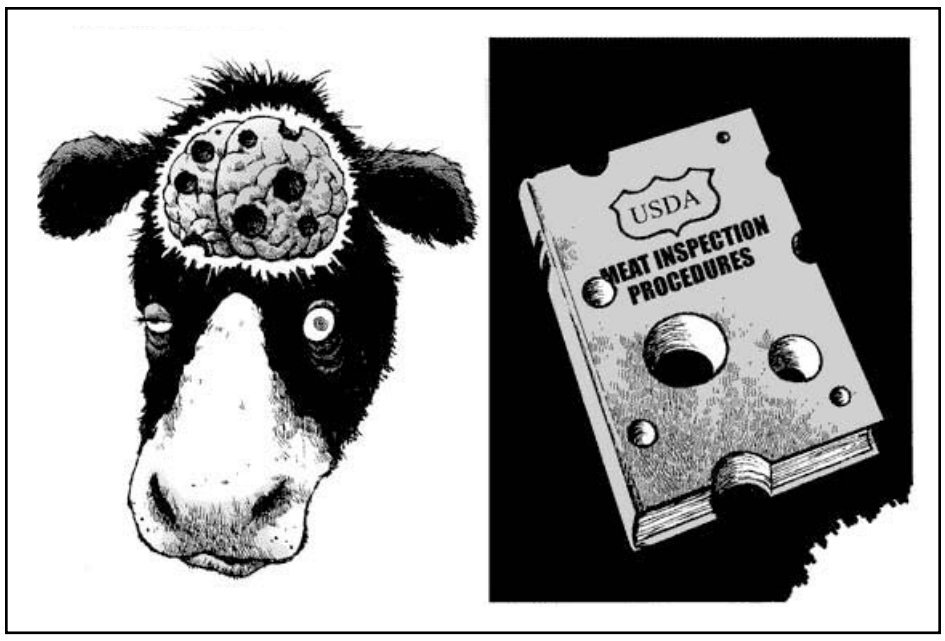
Profit, not food safety, is U.S. gov't priority



Continued from front page
working." She didn't say, however, that only downers—and less than 2 percent of these animals—were tested for BSE.

The Agriculture Department has issued a recall of meat from 20 cows that were slaughtered with the cow that was discovered to be infected with BSE in Washington State just before Christmas. Before the case was discovered, the sick cow's meat had been shipped to at least nine states.

Beef products made from the area of the skull, spinal cord and spinal nerve tissue of any cow older than 30 months will be banned for human consumption along with the small intestine of cows of any age.

The mixing of cattle blood into the feed of young calves would still be permitted, a practice that Stanley Prusiner, a Nobel Prize winner in medicine for his work on the proteins that cause mad cow disease, called "a really stupid idea."

A 2001 study by the Government Accounting Office found that one-fifth of U.S. feed and rendering companies that handle prohibited material had no system to prevent the contamination of cattle feed. A follow-up study in 2002 said the Food and Drug Administration's "inspection database is so severely flawed" that "it should not be used to assess compliance" with the feed ban.

So far, cattle on three farms in Washington State have been placed under quarantine. One of them is a calf-feeding farm where the bull calf of the infected cow is believed to be present. USDA officials have said that probably all of the farm's male calves under 30 days old will be killed and tested for BSE.

Restoring the confidence of export buyers and domestic consumers in the safety of U.S. beef has been the central concern of the Agriculture Department since the discovery of the presence of the disease. In a Christmas Eve press conference Secretary Veneman gave assurances that it is safe to eat beef and that it "would be among the items served at her family's Christmas dinner."

Trade rivalry with Canada, Australia

USDA officials have seized on the possible origin of the infected cow being from Canada to buttress their claim that U.S. beef is safe. But Ottawa's chief veterinarian, Dr. Brian Evans, said that any conclusion as to the origin of the infected cow was "premature." Evans said details on the cow's records in the United States do not match those kept in Canada. "As yet there is no definitive evidence that confirms that the BSE-infected cow originated in Canada," he said.

On January 2 the USDA announced it would continue to enforce a ban on import of cattle from Canada that was imposed last May when a cow in Alberta tested positive for mad cow disease. It is the latest trade dispute between Washington and Ottawa.

"If somebody's lax enforcement of feed rules was the culprit, please Lord, let it be Canada's," wrote *Wall Street Journal* columnist Holman Jenkins January 3.

More than 30 governments have banned import of U.S. beef. The ban has resulted in some $300 million worth of beef backed up in ports, on roads, on ships at sea, or in customs offices around the world, according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Refrigerated fresh beef is worthless after about 60 days in storage and the quality of frozen meat deteriorates significantly.

The move was led by Tokyo, which purchased $800 million in U.S. beef last year, a third of total U.S. exports. Australian agriculture minister Warren Truss described the ban on import of U.S. beef as a golden opportunity for the Australian beef industry. "Australia could pick up a lot of business to Japan and Korea, replacing U.S. exports," said Richard Rains, a chief executive of the beef export company Sanger Australia. The stocks of the Australian Agricultural Company, another large beef exporter, rose from $A0.14 to $A1.23 on the Australian Stock Exchange. Australia, the world's largest beef exporter, is Washington's main competitor.

Capitalists in Argentina, among the largest beef exporters in semicolonial countries, also expect to cash in on the ban on U.S. beef imports. Argentina exports its beef mainly to Germany, the United Kingdom, Holland, Italy, Brazil, Chile, and Israel. Argentine beef exports have suffered from restrictions in many countries, including the United States, since an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease in 2001.

Worldwide there have been more than 180,000 reported cases of mad cow disease in cattle since it was first diagnosed in Britain in 1986. U.S. capitalists have sought to benefit from the resulting economic blows dealt to their competitors in the United Kingdom and more recently in Canada.

Washington uses quake aid to pressure Tehran

Continued from front page
and food and medical supplies.

In October those three imperialist governments had arm-twisted Tehran into signing an agreement permitting surprise inspections of its nuclear power and research facilities. Iranian officials have repeatedly insisted that the country's nuclear program is not for military purposes but for meeting electrical power needs.

In contrast, Cuban president Fidel Castro sent a message to Iranian president Mohammad Khatami saying that revolutionary Cuba "is ready to offer whatever assistance is needed to alleviate the suffering of the victims" with no strings attached, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting news agency.

In a December 29 *Washington Post* interview, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell described as "encouraging" Tehran's decision to give International Atomic Energy Agency officials the go-ahead to conduct surprise inspections, and its acceptance of the U.S. aid in Bam. Powell said, "We should keep open the possibility of dialogue at an appropriate point in the future."

Post reporter Robin Wright commented, "U.S. officials have been encouraged by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's [recent] meetings with Jordan's King Abdullah and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak." The governments of Jordan and Egypt remain the only two Middle Eastern regimes to have officially recognized the state of Israel.

Tehran rejects delegation

On January 2 the Iranian government rejected Washington's proposal to send a "humanitarian" delegation headed by Sen. Elizabeth Dole and other U.S. officials to Iran. Tehran did not dismiss the offer outright, but said the time "is not ripe."

"There should be something more substantial from the Bush administration, like taking back the 'axis of evil' title and waiving the senseless economic sanctions permanently, as well as returning Iran's assets frozen" since 1979, said the Tehran daily *Kayhan* in an editorial.

One week after the quake reduced much of Bam to dust, 30,000 bodies have been dug out of its ruins. Many have been reburied in mass graves dug out by bulldozers. Government officials say the death toll could reach as high as 50,000 in a city that formerly housed nearly 100,000 people. Around 90 percent of Bam's buildings—many of which were constructed using mud bricks—have been destroyed.

"The houses had steel in them but they were not designed to withstand earthquakes," said Maheri Alizadeh, 52. "Why shouldn't the government make sure that these houses are built properly in a country like here, where earthquakes are so frequent?" A 1990 earthquake that hit northwestern Iran took 50,000 lives.

"The earthquake reduced most of the buildings to something like talcum powder," said Barry Sessions, a rescue worker from the United Kingdom. "There are few voids or gaps left in the buildings where we would normally find survivors."

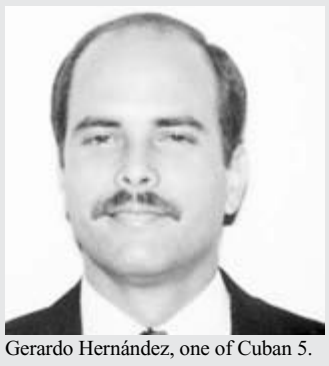
In a column published in the *Christian Science Monitor* under the title, "Iran's quake: Nothing 'natural' about this disaster," London writer Brendan O'Neill commented, "Humanity has developed the technology and know-how to withstand the effects of many earthquakes." He cited the much lower death toll following tremors of equal or greater power in Japan and the United States.

At times like this, O'Neill said, "I find myself increasingly uncomfortable with the phrase 'natural disaster.'" What the "developing world" needs, he wrote, is "to develop—and fast." He did not explain, however, how that is possible in a world where the imperialist powers have prevented semicolonial nations from developing and robbed them of their resources.

THE MILITANT

Join fight to free Cuban Five

In 2001 a U.S. court jailed five Cubans on "conspiracy" charges for their work in gathering information on U.S.-based groups that have carried out attacks on the Cuban Revolution with Washington's complicity. The 'Militant' carries news of the campaign for their release as part of its coverage defending class war prisoners and building solidarity with the revolution. Don't miss a single issue.


Gerardo Hernández, one of Cuban 5.

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Why U.S. rulers are reorganizing military into more agile force

BY SAM MANUEL AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"Transforming the U.S. Global Defense Posture" was the subject of a December 3 speech by Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Feith reviewed progress made by the U.S. government in implementing a strategic reorganization of its military forces that has been underway over the past two years.

The U.S. military's current structure and organization "still reflect in many ways the mentality and reality of the Cold War era," said Feith. He noted that during the Cold War period, U.S. forces deployed in forward bases were defensive, tripwire units that were expected to fight near where they were based. "The kind of forces used for that mission are not the agile, fast, lean forces we need for the future," the U.S. official stressed.

"Our forces overseas should not remain positioned to fight the Cold War. In the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's demise, we reduced the numbers of U.S. troops deployed forward. But they remained concentrated in their Cold War locations, from which they have had to be deployed to deal with crises elsewhere—in the Balkans, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and other locations," said Feith. "We no longer expect our forces to fight in place; rather, their purpose is to project power into theaters that may be distant from where they are based."

U.S. president George Bush and other top U.S. officials justify this new strategy by what they describe as the need to wage a "global war on terrorism" for the foreseeable future. This objective enjoys broad bipartisan support in Washington, with disputes mostly of a tactical nature.

The "war against terrorism" is the banner under which Washington has carried out military operations targeting bourgeois governments and political forces—primarily in the Middle East—including the regimes headed by the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the governments of Iran and Syria, and groups like Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, which are backed by Tehran and Damascus.

In the vacuum of political leadership created by the counterrevolutionary betrayals of working people by the world Stalinist movement, such regimes and political formations rose to prominence in the Mideast and south Asia. Their use of methods such as suicide bombings and blowing up commercial airliners, coupled with their reactionary political views, have made them relatively isolated and easy targets for imperialism.

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld and others in the administration have spoken out clearly and forcefully about this new U.S. military posture over the last two years. The quick and decisive Anglo-American takeover of Iraq, however—with relatively small and faster-moving military units, low casualties, and spearheaded by special forces troops—was a turning point in this process.

As Rumsfeld put it, for example, in a Jan. 31, 2002, speech to the War College (also known as the National Defense University) in Washington, D.C., "During the Cold War, we faced a fairly predictable set of threats. We came to know a great deal about our adversary, because it was the same one for a long period…. But the Cold War is over. The Soviet Union is gone, and with it, the familiar security environment to which our nation had grown accustomed." Washington no longer needs "a massive, heavy force designed to repel a Soviet tank invasion," Rumsfeld said.

"Today our adversaries have changed," the U.S. defense secretary said. "In the 21st century…we need rapidly deployable, fully integrated joint forces capable of reaching distant theaters quickly and working with our air and sea forces to strike adversaries swiftly, successfully, and with devastating effect."

The way in which the U.S. military carried out its assault on Iraq was brought about partly by the unanticipated decision of the government of Turkey not to allow U.S. armored divisions to use Turkish soil to move against Baghdad. But the rapid invasion and ensuing occupation of Iraq enabled Rumsfeld and other proponents of the new military strategy to leave in the dust many retired generals and other liberal critics of the White House approach, and to set out to implement their strategy swiftly and thoroughly.

Special Operations, officer corps purge

This most radical shift in the organization of the U.S. military since World War II includes a purging of the top officer corps of the U.S. armed forces; increased reliance on Special Operations troops, weapons technology, and more agile units; combination of commands of various branches of the military; dismantling many U.S. bases in Europe and moving them farther to the east; and expansion of NATO's jurisdiction beyond Europe, first to Afghanistan, and most likely elsewhere in the world.

A central part of this transformation of the U.S. military is a major shake-up in the military brass. The most prominent among

U.S. Special Forces soldier trains Filipino troops in Basilan, Philippines, March 2002.

these moves was the appointment of Gen. Peter Shoomaker, a former head of Special Operations Forces, as the new chief of the army last August. Shoomaker was called out of retirement for the post, as the White House skipped over several ranking active-duty generals to bring him in.

This and other new military appointments are directly related to the promotion of elite military units to a central role in U.S. military operations worldwide. President Bush singled out the Special Operations Command for praise following the U.S. war on Iraq this year. Shoomaker headed this command for three years beginning in 1997. He was stationed in Korea in the mid-1970s. Rumsfeld has been among the most outspoken champions of the enhanced role of the Green Berets, Delta Force, and Navy Seals in the U.S. armed forces.

Similarly, Gen. Thomas Franks, head of the U.S. Central Command, which was overall in charge of Washington's assaults on Afghanistan and Iraq, was replaced July 7 by Gen. John Abizaid, who played a major role in carrying out Washington's new military strategy in the conquest of Iraq. Franks, who began his career as an artillery officer, commanded the U.S. assault on Iraq but took early retirement rather than promotion. Abizaid, dubbed the "Mad Arab" by his fellow military brass, began his career by heading a Ranger battalion during the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983. He was second in command to Franks during the war on Iraq.

On September 2, at a ceremony at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, Gen. Charles Holland, commander of U.S. Special Operations Forces—the first Air Force officer to command the elite division—was replaced by Gen. Douglas Brown. After describing the pivotal role of Special Operations in overthrowing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld said in his speech there: "You brought a similar spirit of innovation to the battle of Iraq. Special Operations Forces slipped quietly into the country while Saddam waited for the air war to begin. You hunted Scuds, pinpointed high-value targets, secured oil fields, and established landing strips in the desert to expedite the flow of coalition forces.

"When we were unable to get our forces into Iraq from the north, Special Operations Forces mobilized the Kurdish Peshmerga and not only tied down Saddam Hussein's northern units, but captured Mosul and helped unravel the northern front with amazing speed."

Praising General Brown, Rumsfeld pointed out that he is a 37-year veteran of the Special Operations Forces, having served as an assault pilot in the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people, and "has probably participated in one way or another in every SOF combat campaign since Vietnam."

More civilian control of Pentagon

Part of this process is sticking with the volunteer character of the U.S. armed forces, transferring control of a range of Pentagon operations to civilians—particularly big business, and consolidating the command structure of the military.

On several occasions U.S. officials have rebuffed critics of a volunteer army. These include Democratic congressmen Charles Rangel of New York and John Conyers of Michigan, who introduced legislation for reinstituting the draft leading up to the Iraq war last December, on the justification that "a disproportionate number of the poor and members of minority groups" are enlisted, as Rangel put it.

"Attracting and keeping quality people in the military is the highest priority" of the 2004 U.S. defense budget, reported the February 3 *American Forces Information Service,* a Defense Department publication. It announced that military pay raises would average between 2 and 6.25 percent. In order to retain experienced personnel, the highest raises would go to mid-level grades.

The U.S. defense secretary has also indicated that civilians—that is, private companies with fat contracts to gain—will be taking control of a number of Pentagon operations now run by the military. "We must transform not only our armed forces, but also the Department that serves them by encouraging a culture of creativity and intelligent risk taking," Rumsfeld stated in his Jan. 31, 2002, War College speech. "We must promote a more entrepreneurial approach to developing military capabilities, one that encourages people, all people, to be proactive and not reactive, to behave somewhat less like bureaucrats and more like venture capitalists; one that does not wait for threats to emerge."

Rumsfeld has also criticized past army practices of doing many jobs within the military, such as construction or running of prisons and hospitals used by the armed forces. "So we end up today with what the experts say may be as many as 300,000 uniformed military personnel doing tasks that could be done by nonmilitary personnel—civil service or contractors," he said in an Aug. 25, 2003, address at Lackland Air Force Base. "Now I don't think of running a prison as a core competency of the United States military," he argued during a

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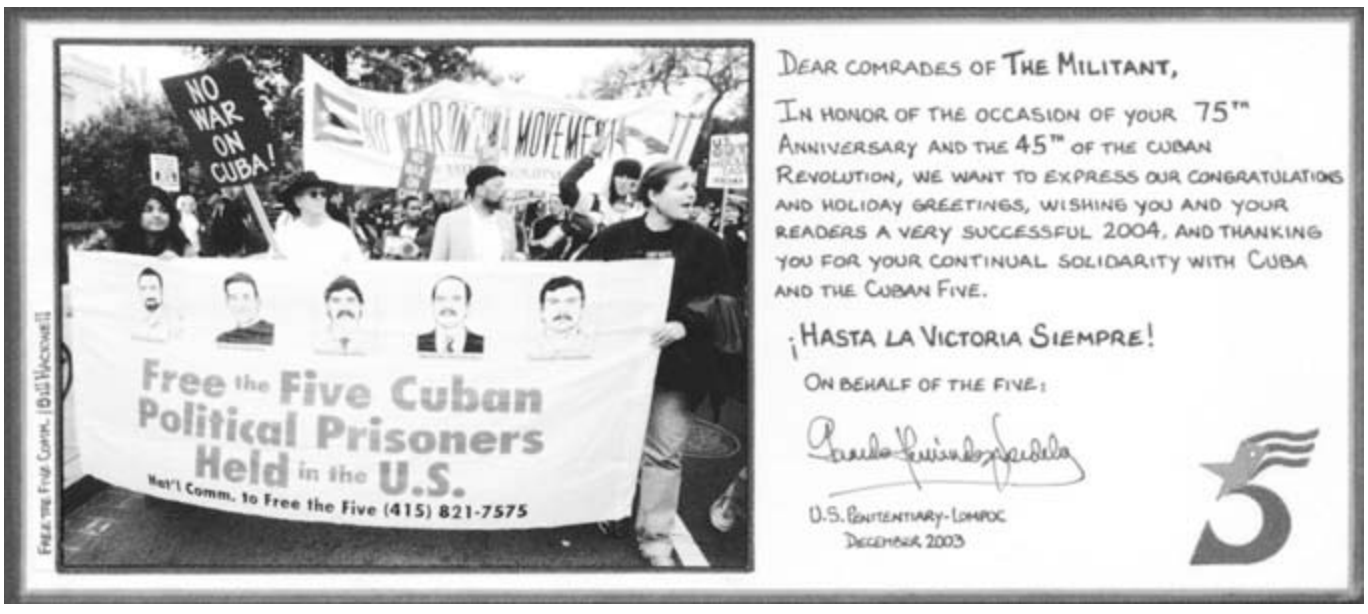
Greetings from Gerardo Hernández, one of five Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. prisons



The above card was sent to the *Militant* by Gerardo Hernández, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder. The Cuban Five, arrested in 1998 and convicted in 2001, had been on an international mission to gather information on ultrarightist groups that have carried out violent attacks on Cuba from U.S. soil with Washington's complicity. Hernández is serving a double life sentence at the U.S. prison in Lompoc, California. Four of the five Cuban prisoners sent messages of greeting to the *Militant*.

Socialist workers in UMWA, UNITE focus on campaign for solidarity with Utah miners

BY JAY RESSLER AND BETSY FARLEY

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah—Noting that strikers at the Co-Op coal mine in Huntington, Utah, were already in the third month of the battle to get their jobs back and to organize a union, Arizona coal miner Sharon Garrison said, "This is the most important labor battle in the United States today."

Garrison opened the discussion at a December 6–7 meeting here of socialist workers who are members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) or work in nonunion mines.

The Co-Op strikers, a majority of whom are originally from Mexico, walked off the job September 22 to meet with management to protest unsafe working conditions and the suspension of a co-worker for union activities. The company responded by calling the sheriff and locking them out. "The stakes are enormous in this battle, especially for the UMWA," Garrison said. "If the miners win this fight for a union, it will be a big step toward the UMWA taking back some of the ground that has been lost, especially in the West, where 55 percent of the total tonnage of coal is mined in the United States.

"Only 11 coal mines west of the Mississippi today are organized by the UMWA," Garrison said. During the 1990s, the union lost significant strength in Utah's Emery and Carbon Counties, once UMWA strongholds, when coal companies shut down their operations only to reopen them nonunion a few years later. Only two UMWA mines remain in Utah today, one of which is currently idled and being bought out by a new company, she said.

"Our union is backing this fight," said Frank Peña, a Colorado miner and UMWA member. The Co-Op miners' fight for justice is featured on the UMWA web site along with an appeal for solidarity, as well as in an article in the current issue of the *UMWA Journal*. The UMWA issued a press release in early October calling on the labor movement to support the Co-Op miners. Letters appealing for solidarity and financial aid for the strike have gone out from the International to all UMWA locals.

"Timing is critical," emphasized Peña. "A broad solidarity campaign is needed, and socialist workers who are coal miners have a special responsibility in helping to advance this fight."

Examples of the kinds of solidarity that have been won so far include the formation of a support organization in Salt Lake City that includes labor officials, religious activists, students at the University of Utah, and other community activists. The committee helped build a rally of 200 in Huntington December 13. Members of UMWA Local 1984 at the Deserado mine in Rangley, Colorado, decided to donate funds for their annual Christmas party to the purchase of food for the Co-Op strikers, and have set up a support committee in the local. UMWA District 2 sent a contribution of $4,000.

Thousands of dollars have been donated by locals of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical, and Energy Workers union (PACE) at refineries in Salt Lake City, and the Catholic Church in Huntington has raised funds to pay rent and utility bills for strikers who need the assistance.

Bob Stranahan, an Arizona coal miner, explained that the retired miners are some of the strongest backers of this strike in the West. He said that "one 92-year-old retired miner and former leader of the UMWA in Utah spoke to the Co-Op miners at a food distribution organized by retired miners from East Carbon, Utah. He told everyone he didn't care where you are from or what language you speak, these miners are fighting to be future members of the UMWA."

Clay Dennison, a UMWA member from Alabama, pointed to the potential for active support from groups such as the Black Lung Association. "Just this week the Black Lung Association from Birmingham, Alabama, sent a contribution along with a message to the Co-Op miners," he said.

The socialist coal miners adjourned their meeting Saturday night to attend a 75th anniversary celebration of the *Militant* newspaper. The audience at the event included students and workers from a local oil refinery and copper mine who are involved in strike solidarity work.

In her report to the meeting, Garrison outlined some of the employers' assaults on the mine workers union as coal companies drive to increase their profits. During the 1970s, she explained, a significant shift in coal production to the West, particularly to the Powder River Basin in Wyoming, took place with the opening of giant mines such as the Belle Ayr, Black Thunder, and North Antelope-Rochelle, each rated as the most productive mine in the United States at one time the past three decades.

The bosses defeated the UMWA in a bitter strike at the Belle Ayr mine in 1975. This defeat was a major setback for mine workers in the Powder River Basin and the West.

In two other hard-fought strikes by the UMWA in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the Big Horn and Decker mines near Sheridan, Wyoming, workers beat back union-busting by the coal bosses. One of the main issues in that fight was against the growing practice by the coal bosses of contracting out work.

In 1999 miners struck at the Deserado mine in Colorado and in 2000 at the Pittsburgh and Midway–owned mines on the Navajo Nation in Tse Bonito, New Mexico, and Kemmerer, Wyoming. The workers were able to beat back company demands to lengthen the workday and severely cut health benefits. But despite the successes scored in these fights the UMWA has continued to take blows in the West.

Garrison explained the coal operators' drive against miners throughout the United States is part and parcel of the capitalist offensive against workers internationally. The U.S. rulers have made gains in their "war on terrorism" and especially in winning greater hegemony over their imperialist rivals. There is no significant opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq today. They have made progress in streamlining their military and implementing their goal of creating a professional military that can be rapidly deployed around the world.

Militant

Strikers in the trailer used at the picket line at Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, December 2003. A central focus of the work of socialist coal miners, garment workers, and meat packers, discussed at meetings held in December, is working with others to broaden solidarity with this union-organizing battle.

U.S. imperialism faces two big obstacles, however, Garrison said. The first is capitalism's relentless enemy, the growing capitalist economic crisis and depression conditions throughout the world. This crisis gives rise to the second obstacle, the working-class resistance it engenders—from Bolivia to Venezuela to Mexico and the United States, including in Utah. The bosses and the government have not been able to push working people and the industrial unions off the center stage of politics.

The Co-Op miners are standing up for their rights in face of a brutal offensive by the bosses throughout the coal industry. "The conditions they face aren't really that much different from those faced by other coal miners around the country," Garrison noted.

"What is different is that the Co-Op miners are in the front ranks of the resistance," she explained. "The outcome of their struggle will have an impact on miners everywhere who currently have no union, as well as those who do. Miners and retirees at the Horizon Natural Resources mines in Illinois, Kentucky, and West Virginia (formerly AEI), for example, are currently in a battle to defend their health benefits."

Jay Ressler is a member of UMWA Local 1248 in southwestern Pennsylvania. Betsy Farley is a laid-off member of UMWA Local 4004 in northeastern Pennsylvania.

'Opportunity and need to help advance this fight'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

NEW YORK—"The strike by the miners at the Co-Op mine in Utah has opened up the opportunity and obligation for socialist workers active in the labor movement to be part of advancing this struggle," said Paul Mailhot, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, in the opening report to a December 20–21 meeting of socialist workers active in UNITE, the national union based among workers in the garment, textile, and related industries.

When the miners—almost all of whom are immigrants from Mexico—first went on strike, Mailhot noted, most had little experience in the U.S. labor movement, and weren't sure what to expect or whether they would get any support. Since then, they have gained support from the UMWA (United Mine Workers of America), other unions in Utah, immigrant rights activists, and others. "We have gone from fear to confidence," one striker told Mailhot on a recent visit to the picket line.

"The solidarity committee in Salt Lake City, which involves union members who work in steel and at oil refineries, students, and church members, is an example of the kind of broad support that can be won for this struggle around the country," Mailhot said.

Socialist unionists at the meeting work in garment and textile plants, many organized by UNITE, in cities across the country from Boston to Seattle to Birmingham, Alabama. The majority of the members of the party's national UNITE fraction are sewing machine operators, the registration of an important advance after several years of work—collective and individual—to master the skills needed to hold jobs in the heart of the garment industry.

Jacquie Henderson, who works as a sewing machine operator in a nonunion garment shop in Houston, spoke about some of the strike solidarity efforts she is part of in that city. "We are circulating a holiday greeting card of support in our shop for the Co-Op strikers," Henderson said, "and are asking for donations for the strike fund." Eighteen co-workers signed the card and contributed $40, Henderson reported. People who were involved in the successful fight earlier this year to prevent the deportation of *Militant* staff writer Róger Calero, along with anti-police brutality activists, are among those involved in the strike solidarity activities in Houston.

Mary Martin, who works in a nonunion upholstery shop near Des Moines, Iowa, had a similar experience circulating a card and getting donations for the strike fund from her co-workers. "And in Des Moines, activists from the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride in October are interested in the Co-Op miners' fight," she reported.

"The challenge is not only to win solidarity from our co-workers," said Angel Lariscy, a sewing machine operator in Newark, New Jersey. "We also need to gain support for this fight from our union."

Chris Remple, a garment worker at a UNITE-organized sewing plant near Pittsburgh, was part of winning union support for sending a solidarity message from his shop. Solidarity efforts for coal miners and the Black Lung Association have always gotten a good response from union members in this plant, said Remple.

Maggie Trowe, a sewing machine operator and UNITE member from Boston, gave a report on the importance of strengthening the organized presence of socialist workers in UNITE in New York City.

The socialist unionists met in the heart of New York's garment district, where some 9,000 workers are employed in hundreds of shops, several dozens of which are organized by UNITE. "New York City is the heart of UNITE," Trowe said. "UNITE officials report that there are at least 7,000 garment workers organized in the union, in addition to 4,000 laundry workers and others organized by UNITE. The union organizes about 350 shops throughout the city. In New York as whole, there are 33,000 apparel workers, making garment the largest manufacturing industry in New York City. Apparel workers' labor adds more than $4 billion in value to inputs each year," Trowe said. New York is the national headquarters of UNITE, and the union has an active political life in the city, including organizing drives, participating in immigrant rights actions, supporting other union struggles, and backing women's rights fights. "UNITE has a multinational membership, with many workers who have had class-struggle and union experience in other countries bringing that experience into the union here," Trowe said. "We can win some of these fellow workers to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists."

"Hundreds of UNITE members, many New York garment workers, created a sea of red shirts at the rally for the Yale strikers in New Haven, Connecticut, in September," Trowe said. "More than 2,000 formed one of the largest contingents at the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride rally in Flushing Meadows October 4."

At the end of November, Trowe reported, more than 100 UNITE-organized laundry workers walked off the job at Jung Sun, a large industrial laundry in Queens. Nine hours later the company agreed to the industry-wide contract that UNITE members have won at 36 other laundries employing some 4,000 workers.

The importance of basing the socialist movement's national UNITE fraction in New York City was underscored in the discussion by reports on the new Pathfinder bookstore now under construction in the Garment District here. A 10-week construction project has started to ready the offices, and socialist garment and textile workers signed up at the meeting to join other volunteers on the project over the next two months.

Susan LaMont is a sewing machine operator in Birmingham, Alabama.

Support for miners

Continued from front page
unfair labor practice strike against CW Mining, also known as Co-Op, for being fired illegally on September 22 when they protested the unjust suspension of a co-worker. The miners are fighting for recognition of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as their union.

The tour is beginning January 12 in San Jose and will extend to other parts of the Bay Area. The strikers have been invited by Joan Emslie, president of Local 250 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and member of the South Bay Central Labor Council Executive Board, to attend a delegates' meeting of the council, as well as two meetings of shop stewards of SEIU Local 250, which organizes hospital workers. They will also speak at a meeting of Teamsters Local 287 and Communication Workers of America Local 9423.

More than 100 days into the strike, the miners at Co-Op remain firm, strengthened by the growing solidarity. They report that during the month of December the company hardly trucked any coal out of the mine. The number of trucks recorded by picket captains on each of the four daily picket shifts was zero.

Message from Minnesota unionists

Support for the miners continues to broaden across the country. In St. Paul, Minnesota, a solidarity message was sent with the signatures of several people who took part in a December 18 union social sponsored by United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 789. Among the signers were Local 789 president Don Seaquist; Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhart; John Massetti, secretary-treasurer of Machinists Local Lodge 143; and Ben Miller, a field agent for the Lakes and Plains Regional Council of the Carpenters.

The message stated, "Your fight is important to us and to other workers in this country. An injury to one is an injury to all! In the union there is strength! ¡*En la union está la fuerza*!"

Letters of support and donations for the miners have poured in over the past month. Christmas cards signed by meat packers in New Zealand, a letter of support in English and Spanish from a Steelworkers local in Pennsylvania, and a card signed by garment workers in Boston are just a few examples. A total of $2,650 in donations were received by the District 22 office of the United Mine Workers of America in Price, Utah, over the Christmas holidays, in addition to numerous local donations.

A couple from Salt Lake City, Utah, came down to Huntington with their children to donate $100 and toys, and to chat with the miners. Two union pipefitters from the nearby power plant recently stopped by after work to give their support, bringing refreshments. A reporter from the *Daily Herald* in Provo, Utah, left his business card at the picket trailer on New Year's Day saying the paper wants to write an in-depth story on the fight.

The Co-Op Miners Solidarity Committee in Salt Lake City, a coalition of labor, students, and religious organizations, has set a calendar of support activities for January. The student group in this committee at the University of Utah, the Student Labor Action Project, is inviting Co-Op miners to speak on campus. The speakers include a woman who escaped from the Kingston family and supports the miners. The Kingstons, the owners of the Co-Op mine, are a notorious capitalist family in Utah that has been in the news because of abuse against women by prominent members of the polygamous family.

Other upcoming activities in Salt Lake include a fund-raising concert, a visit to the governor of Utah, a caravan of cars from Salt Lake to the Co-Op picket, and more picketing of Kingston businesses.

A delegation from Los Angeles arrived here January 3 with two carloads of food for the strikers. They were greeted at the town hall by members of the leadership committee and Jim Stevenson, a UMWA international representative.

Ana Laura Villagrana, president of the Latin American Society at California State University in Los Angeles, read a message of support from her organization. The campus organization has extended an invitation to the miners to come to Los Angeles to speak about their fight at a meeting on "Labor across borders" in early February.

The Los Angeles supporters presented cards and letters of solidarity they brought from other students and unionists. Among the signers of the messages were members of the Los Angeles Cuba Coalition, which made a collection among guests at its annual New Year's celebration. The $600 raised in Los Angeles, which included $100 collected by workers at a meatpacking plant, was used to bring food and make a donation to the strike fund.

Ana María Sánchez, one of the Co-Op miners, told the Los Angeles group about the strike and introduced several of the other strike leaders.

"The main thing we need is more solidarity," Sánchez said. "We are going to win this fight, no matter what it takes to get a union in there."

More solidarity messages and funds are needed in this fight. They can be sent to: UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, Utah 84501. Checks should be made out to "Co-op Miners Relief Fund."

Dennis Richter from San Francisco; Tom Fiske from St. Paul; and Seth Dellinger, James Vincent, and Edwin Rosales from Los Angeles contributed to this article.

New York: volunteers begin work on new Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center

Militant photos by Karl Butts

On January 3 a crew of 15 volunteers from around the country began putting up walls in the new Pathfinder bookstore and showroom distribution center located in New York's Garment District. In the coming weeks the crew will start on plumbing, hanging lights, and finishing work on walls and floors. Additional volunteers are needed, including those with these skills. Top and bottom right: volunteers erect walls. Bottom left: unloading materials.

Contributions to HQ fund accelerate

Continued from front page
of its books and pamphlets.

Over time this address will become a magnet for those in the New York area—and who travel to New York from across the United States and other countries—who are looking for books with a scientific explanation of the contradictions of class society and a road forward for those opposed to U.S. imperialism's unceasing wars, bloody plunder, and domination of the working people of the world.

It will have a kitchen that will serve as a place where workers and young people who come in after a day's work or those coming out of the offices at the headquarters during a break in their political work can sit down, relax, and talk politics and have a meal and refreshments along with it, as they prepare for political activity.

Arrin Hawkins and I are honored to have been invited to join Martín Koppel and Janice Prescott as directors of this nationwide effort.

Funds are being spent *right now* to purchase the sheetrock, studs, glass, paint, lights, and many other materials needed for work already under way. Some $10,000 has already been spent on materials, and another $25,000 is projected to be spent over the next two weeks.

To help defray construction costs George Bryant, a cabinetmaker in Ontario, Canada, has offered the use of a cabinet shop and will donate his labor to build custom cabinets for the new kitchen as well as bookshelves for the New York bookstore and hall.

The construction crew took advantage of a local Internet company going out of business to make a bulk purchase of lights, kitchen equipment, blinds, a new work table, and other needed items for a total of $1,500—a big savings over the previously budgeted amount of $7,500.

Construction began in earnest on January 3. Fifteen volunteers framed the new Pathfinder bookstore and hall. On the crew were volunteers from California, Georgia, Texas, Massachusetts, Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, and Washington. A volunteer who is a general contractor in New York spent two days helping put up walls and teaching others. He plans to come back in the evenings to work on hanging doors and spackling walls for painting.

The crew includes half a dozen young volunteers, some with little construction experience but plenty of desire to learn. Several skilled workers have anchored teams to do framing, sheetrocking, electrical work, and other tasks. In the coming weeks the crew will start on plumbing, hanging lights, and finishing work on walls and floors. More volunteers are needed, especially those with these skills, as well as others willing to learn and put in some hard days of work.

To accomplish this work, we must collect as much as possible of the $125,000 pledged over the next few weeks and get the total pledges well above the $150,000 goal.

We have had initial successes in several cities. In Los Angeles, a supporter who works as a nurse has pledged $1,500 and another, an airline ramp worker, is giving $1,250, including $1,000 he will receive as a company bonus in January.

An oil refinery worker sent in $1,000 and a longshore worker did likewise following a discussion on the plans for a political center in New York and the urgent need for early payment on pledges.

With Southern California pledges topping $7,000 and with many more friends and supporters of the communist movement yet to approach—including in San Diego, where a house meeting is being organized—supporters of the fund in that area have taken a $15,000 goal.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, 15 supporters of the Socialist Workers Party gathered January 3 at the home of one of them to hear reports by SWP leader Dennis Richter and me on the successful Red Saturday and large public meeting in New York in mid-December. Pledges to the fund appeal exceeded $9,000 by January 4. Among the pacesetters were rail, steel, and airline workers, who gave between $1,000 and $2,300.

Many more meetings will be held in San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Diego over the next 10 days.

A similar effort in Atlanta, over the January 4–6 weekend resulted in $6,000 in new pledges.

Two supporters in Hawaii kicked in a couple thousand after a phone discussion with fund co-director Janice Prescott.

Supporters of the fund in every area will be making it a top priority to meet with everyone in their area who is a potential contributor. They will get a receptive response from many working people engaged in union-building activities, young people involved in fights for social justice, militant farmers, opponents of Washington's aggressive policies abroad, and many more.

Contributions of every size are important and are necessary to reach the goal. Many contributors will be in a position to give a few thousand dollars if asked. It will make a big difference to contribute as much as possible on the spot, and then pay the rest of the pledge as rapidly as possible. This is essential so that we avoid literally halting construction and sitting a crew down. The funds must all be received by January 31.

Checks should be made out to the 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal and sent to the January 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal, c/o SWP National Office, 307 West 36th Street, 10th Floor North, New York, NY 10018.

Please send news updates to the *Militant* on how the campaign is being carried out in your area. The weekly chart will list the total payments from local areas that are received by Saturday of each week.

Fraternally,
Joel Britton

Success in campaign to boost sales of Pathfinder!

Promoters of Pathfinder books scored a victory in the 2003 international campaign to step up sales of books on revolutionary politics by the publishing house. December sales alone totaled nearly $25,600, taking sales for the year to almost $242,700—over the goal of $240,000. The campaign for the second half of 2003 aimed to achieve a 10 percent increase over the first six months of the year.

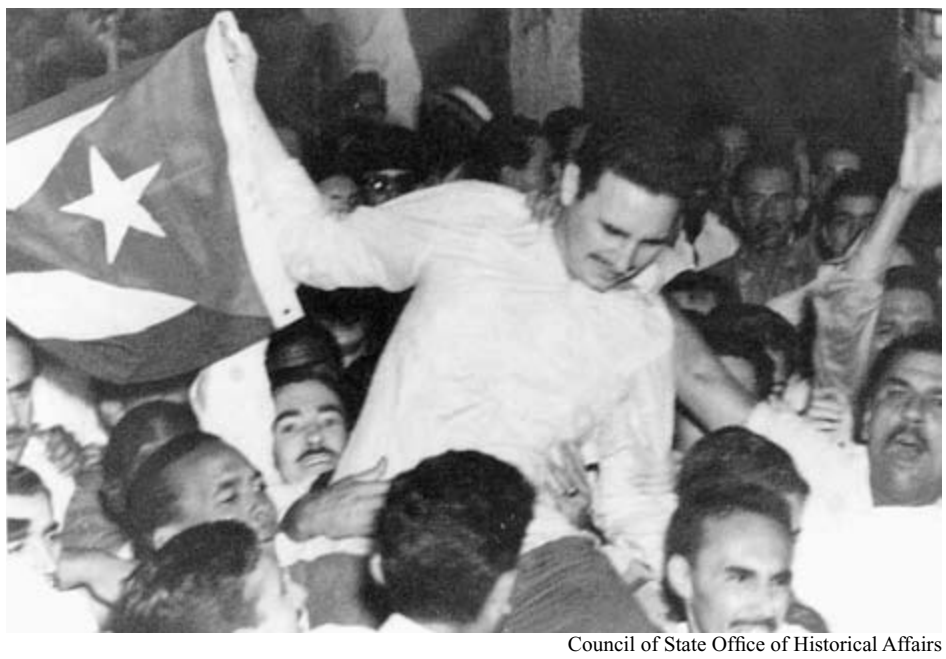
Among December's highlights were sales at the Guadalajara International Book Fair (see article page 11), and substantial orders from schools and libraries.

The *Militant* will be carrying fuller coverage of the campaign.

How July 26 Movement fought for leadership of Cuban revolutionary movement in 1950s

Published below are excerpts from *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, by Armando Hart, a new book by Pathfinder Press that will be available in late January in both English and Spanish editions. This firsthand account of the struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, headed by Fidel Castro, is now accessible for the first time ever to English-speaking readers. It recounts the events from the perspective of revolutionary cadres organizing in the cities. Armando Hart was a central organizer of the urban underground and is one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

The *Militant* has been reprinting excerpts from the new book and this week's feature is taken from the fifth chapter, which describes efforts by the July 26 Movement in 1955–56 to win the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard and of the broader movement against the Batista dictatorship, contesting for influence with political currents within the Orthodox Party and other bourgeois opposition groups.



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs

As he and other jailed revolutionaries were freed by Batista dictatorship in May 1955, the result of a mass amnesty campaign, Fidel Castro was greeted as a hero.

Fulgencio Batista had carried out a coup on March 10, 1952, and imposed a ruthless dictatorship backed by Washington. On July 26, 1953, a group of 160 revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro launched simultaneous armed attacks on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks in Bayamo, both in eastern Cuba, aiming to spark a popular revolt. While the attacks did not produce an uprising against the dictatorship and many of the captured revolutionaries were tortured and murdered, they marked the beginning of a growing popular struggle to overthrow the regime.

Council of State Office of Historical Affairs

Cuban revolutionaries were active in December 1955 strike by 200,000 sugar workers against wage cuts, where workers virtually took over towns like the one pictured above in Las Villas province.

Released from prison as a result of a broad amnesty campaign, Castro and other surviving veterans of the Moncada attack founded the July 26 Movement. In July 1955 Castro and other leaders left for Mexico, where they organized an expedition of 82 combatants that returned aboard the yacht *Granma*, landing in southeastern Cuba on Dec. 2, 1956. They launched a revolutionary war that culminated in a popular insurrection leading to the overthrow of the dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959. The revolutionary victory led workers and farmers to take political power and opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Copyright ©2004 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Material in brackets added by the *Militant*.

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BY ARMANDO HART

Ever since March 10 we had maintained that the dictatorship could be overthrown only by a popular revolution. Fidel's tactical orientation, however, was not to immediately raise the question of armed struggle, since responsibility for such a course should fall upon the tyranny, not the revolutionaries. The Moncada combatants had just been amnestied, so it made no sense to raise the slogan of insurrection.

Despite the obstacles, Fidel tried to find peaceful and political solutions. But the government slammed all doors. It blocked the convening of a large rally on the university steps called for May 20, 1955. There was also discussion about having Fidel appear on a well-known political television program called "Meet the Press" and on the radio show "The Orthodox Hour," but these were not allowed either.

Then we began to wage the most important political battle—denouncing the crimes committed by the regime on July 26, 1953, and the days that followed. Even though the accusations were not a call to revolution, they damaged Batista more than raising insurrection would have. Without calling for a war, Fidel demoralized the enemy to such an extent that an official— Waldo Pérez Almaguer, who had been governor of Oriente province at the time—decided he did not want to take responsibility for the horrible crimes of July 26–29, 1953. Spurred on by Fidel's public appeal, Pérez Almaguer set about confirming the charges.

It was not easy to find a newspaper in Havana able to print these revelations. But the daily *La Calle* [The street], a tribune of the people run by Luis Orlando Rodríguez, did so on June 3. I went with Fidel to the newspaper's offices to see the pages being prepared.

Fidel's article "You Lie, Chaviano!" became the most important accusation against the tyranny. Soon afterwards, the government ordered publication of *La Calle* suspended….

These were months of intense activity. Fidel had proclaimed that in 1956 we would be free or we would be martyrs. Meanwhile, the traditional opposition parties kept trying to reach a peaceful arrangement with Batista.

Melba [Hernández], Haydée [Santamaría], Faustino [Pérez], and I maintained contacts on behalf of the Movement with the Martí Civic Front of Women, an organization that had been born in November 1952 to bring together Cuban women in the fight against the tyranny.

Shortly after Fidel left for Mexico, we received Manifesto no. 1, which he had drawn up and signed. In this document, the Moncada leader reiterated the road of insurrection and emphasized the measures that in essence had been presented in *History Will Absolve Me*. In a fifteen-point program he set forth the first measures that a revolutionary government would implement, and this was the program he carried out in the first months of 1959. We worked intensively to publish the Manifesto and distribute it clandestinely. It became the vehicle for organizing cells of the July 26 Movement, and it was distributed from one end of the country to the other.

Sometime later, in December 1955, Fidel issued Manifesto no. 2. These materials were a political call with a very clear revolutionary content. Together with *History Will Absolve Me,* they would become the guide for immediate action and the program of the Cuban Revolution.

Throughout these months, the expedition was being prepared in Mexico, and in Cuba organizational work was being carried out in support of the landing. We directed all the organization's tasks to these ends.

The Movement was also involved in other events during this period, of which I'll mention the most significant. A meeting was held of representatives of the membership of the Cuban People's Party to debate the political line to be followed in those times of revolutionary ferment. Given the significance of that meeting, the main party leaders attended. Among those representing the party organization were political bigwigs serving only their own venal interests. In addition, there were honest men like Manuel Bisbé, and progressives like Leonardo Fernández Sánchez. The latter two supported Fidel's positions.

Ñico López, Faustino Pérez, Pedro Miret, and I also attended, with the task of asking the Orthodox Party to formally approve the insurrectional line. The heart of the matter was that a large number of party members were putting pressure on it to decide on revolutionary action. With the support of honest leaders, they were demanding that the Orthodox Party formally approve the July 26 line, that is, for revolution.

The atmosphere was hot. The Orthodox Youth, our main ally within the organization, was becoming stronger every day. Fidel's prestige among the youth and the party ranks was growing, to such a degree that in the minds of many leaders and members he was filling the space left by Eddy Chibás.

In the midst of a large group of delegates, Faustino read out the July 26 Movement's proposal, calling for the Orthodox Party to proclaim the insurrectional line.

The general atmosphere in the country, the popular roots of the Orthodox Party, Fidel's prestige, and the action of a vanguard—all this resulted in the positions of the July 26 Movement being approved by that meeting. This was the last time all the elements that made up the Orthodox Party came together. The rank and file of the party and its youth had surpassed their traditional leaders.

Anyone who opposed the proposal of the July 26 Movement would have been rejected. The petty politicians were morally very weak, and they turned out to be the only real enemies at the meeting. They acted demagogically, and to their surprise they found themselves in a position they had not anticipated. Since they claimed to support the insurrectional line, and since this line was being put forward for official vote, they had no alternative but to accept it formally. For the big-shot politicians of the Orthodox Party there was no alternative: either they united with Batista or they joined the revolution. A leadership had emerged in Cuba capable of transforming and developing the purest ideas of the Orthodox Party.

Fidel used to point out that the July 26 Movement was the revolutionary instrument of the Orthodox Party. But he knew that neither the Cuban People's Party nor its youth organization would be adequate to carry out the insurrectional line, since they were incapable of moving the revolution forward.

The best of the rank and file of the Orthodox Party had joined the July 26 Movement, which was already at the head of the popular movement. Thus Ñico, Faustino, Pedro, and I, on behalf of the July 26 Movement, witnessed the party's death. The Orthodox Party's youth and its best rank-and-file cadres were to make up the basic structure of the July 26 Movement. Although the party ceased to exist, it should be emphasized, we never abandoned its ideals.

Juan Manuel Márquez, the most outstanding revolutionary leader of the Orthodox Party, built up a close relationship with Fidel and became one of his closest collaborators. He worked with Fidel in Mexico and the United States, came on the *Granma,* and died heroically after the landing.

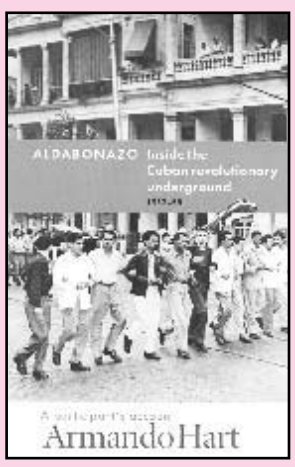
Other members of the Orthodox Party leadership closely identified with us at that time included Luis Orlando Rodríguez, Conchita Fernández, Vicentina Antuña, Manuel Bisbé, and Leonardo Fernández Sánchez.

On September 1, 1955, several bank strikes erupted. This was a very sensitive matter for the ruling class, since the strikes threatened to develop an openly political character. The strike's organizers were opponents of the regime. My brother Enrique, who worked in the bank at Línea and Paseo, was one of the most outstanding promoters of the strike. He did it with a very clear understanding that he was contributing to the fight against the tyranny. He did not have the slightest uncertainty in this regard.

Enrique was arrested. Taking advantage of

Continued on next page

Coming in January from Pathfinder



Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58

by Armando Hart

In this firsthand account by one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, we meet many of the men and women who in the 1950s led the urban underground in the fight against the brutal U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Together with their comrades-in-arms of the Rebel Army, they not only brought down the tyranny, their revolutionary actions and example worldwide changed the history of the 20th century—and the century to come. $25.00

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or from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.

‘You’re next’: brutal message of U.S. ‘war on terror’

Preface to new Greek edition of ‘Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War’ by Jack Barnes

Published below is a translation of the preface by Bobbis Misailides to the second Greek edition of *Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War* by Jack Barnes, due to be released early in 2004 in Athens, Greece. The publisher, Diethnes Vima, also distributes eight other Pathfinder titles they have translated and published in Greek, including *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*, by Jack Barnes; *The Truth About Yugoslavia*, by Argiris Malapanis; *Problems of Women’s Liberation*, by Evelyn Reed; *The Second Declaration of Havana*; and *Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government: 1848 to Today* by Mary-Alice Waters.

Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War by Barnes was first published in issue no. 10 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder Press. The first edition of the Greek translation was issued by Diethnes Vima in 1995. The preface is copyright © Pathfinder Press 2004. Reprinted by permission.

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BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES

As this second edition of “Imperialism’s March toward Fascism and War” goes to press, the capitalist rulers of the United States, Europe, and Japan are being driven by intensifying competition and sharpening interimperialist conflict common to the opening stages of a world economic and financial crisis. As a result, the ruling classes of these rival powers are pressing attacks on workers and farmers at home—on the toilers’ wages, their working conditions, their social wage, and broader conquests. And increasingly, on their political rights as well, more and more in the name of carrying out the “global war on terrorism.”

This book is based on a 1994 talk by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, given to regional educational conferences in several U.S. cities. Since that talk was presented almost a decade ago, U.S. imperialism has codified in the so-called Dayton Agreement of 1995 its “belated” intervention in the Yugoslav crisis discussed in these pages. In the process of that military campaign and its subsequent stages in Kosova and repercussions throughout the Balkans, Washington dealt blows to its imperialist rivals in Europe. At the same time, now acting as the major “European power,” the U.S. government imposed its interests on the Yugoslav victims of what is presented as a “humanitarian mission.”

U.S. troops prepare to invade Kosova in 1999. Washington’s military assault on Yugoslav workers state also dealt blows to U.S. imperialism’s rivals in Europe.

These events and their political consequences are of particular significance to working people and youth in Greece, since Athens, one of the weaker members of NATO and the European Union, has sought throughout to enhance the relative profits and power of Greek finance capital by increasing its “sphere of influence” in the Balkans and throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

Through Washington’s lethal lightning assault on Iraq in 2003, and its continuing imperial occupation of that country, the U.S. rulers are dealing further blows to competitors in “Old Europe”—primarily France and Germany—who are not accepting the U.S. government’s lead rapidly enough. With a “New Europe”–based “coalition of the willing” now behind it, Washington is increasing its blackmail through intensifying military pressures against Iran, north Korea, Syria, Libya, and other countries. “You’re next!”—that’s the brutal message of the “war on terrorism.”

At the same time, the imperialists in the United States, the European Union, and elsewhere, regardless of other ups and downs, are maintaining their decades-long hostility and punitive policies toward the people of Cuba and their socialist revolution. And they are preparing to intervene anywhere in the Americas, beginning in Venezuela, where the toilers resist attempts by the imperialists and local propertied classes to turn back the clock.

Toward the end of the 1990s, with the exception of Japan, the long-term retreat of the labor movement bottomed out across the imperialist world. This sea change in working-class politics opens modest but genuine and ongoing opportunities for the communist movement worldwide to integrate itself within, and to respond to, resistance by workers, trade unionists, and other toilers. And as Barnes demonstrates in these pages, U.S. imperialism is far from all-powerful. To the contrary, he stresses the historic decline of that power and points out the line of march of the toilers toward overturning capitalist rule, establishing a government of the workers and farmers, and joining in the world-wide struggle for socialism. Working people across the imperialist world, including in Greece, confront these same historic tasks.

We urge those of you who find this book of interest to also seek out, read, and discuss with others the companion title by Jack Barnes, published in 2002 by Diethnes Vima, entitled “U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War.”

Bobbis Misailides
Diethnes Vima
January 2004

How July 26 Movement contested for leadership

Continued from Page 6

being a lawyer, I inquired into his case at the Urgency Court. They had ordered others arrested to be set free, but they did not want to let Enrique out since they regarded his case as a political one, not solely a labor matter. The judge who functioned in this repressive body refused to hand over the file to me. A big uproar took place at the courthouse that could have ended in an altercation. In order not to be arrested, I left and went into hiding at the home of some relatives who lived in the Víbora neighborhood.

Granma archives

Bourgeois opposition to Fulgencio Batista (left) aimed to keep popular protests off the streets. When he met Cosme de la Torriente (right) in 1955, the dictator “seduced him with words,” says Armando Hart in new book.

A few days later the strikes ended and the court had no alternative but to let Enrique go. He was released along with all the others detained, since from a strictly legal point of view they were all equally involved.

The traditional opposition parties were still strong enough to convene a great outdoor public meeting November 19, 1955, which we all attended because the people were there. That was the famous rally at the Plaza of the Forsaken at Muelle de Luz pier, organized under the leadership of Don Cosme de la Torriente, a veteran of the Independence War and by then an octogenarian, who had become a political figure for the traditional opposition parties.

In order to discuss what we should do at that meeting, as well as to evaluate other political questions, I traveled to the United States to meet with the head of the movement. Fidel was there touring different cities and carrying out recruitment work among exiles and immigrants.

I witnessed his tireless activity. It seemed to me as if we were in times like those of the War of Independence or the struggles of the 1930s against the Machado tyranny. Today I feel as much pride in that visit as would any nineteenth century Cuban who traveled to Key West to visit Martí. In Miami Fidel spoke to me about economic questions and programmatic measures that were reflected in the documents mentioned earlier.

I raised with him the situation with regard to unity of the opposition and the efforts that Cosme de la Torriente, José Miró Cardona, and other leaders were making. Fidel recommended that I speak to Don Cosme and ask him to play a recorded speech by Fidel during the rally at Muelle de Luz, which was supposed to be an act of unity.

Upon my return, Haydée and I met with Don Cosme at his office in Old Havana. The meeting was arranged by Miró Cardona. Pelayo Cuervo Navarro also participated in it.[1] It was an unpleasant situation. Don Cosme began speaking and would not let us get a word in. In an attempt to say something and not “interrupt him disrespectfully,” I began my arguments with the words, “Venerable patriot.” But the abyss separating us prevented any dialogue. He even said Fidel should organize his own meeting, since the one at Muelle de Luz had different objectives from those being pursued by the head of the July 26 Movement. Don Cosme was right about that. But what he didn’t know was that Fidel Castro, just a few years later, was to organize the largest political rallies in the history of Cuba and the Americas.

When the rally at Muelle de Luz took place on November 19, 1955, it ended, as the Cuban saying goes, like the “Guatao party”—that is, by almost coming to blows. Groups of Authentic Party supporters physically attacked the revolutionary militants as we chanted, “Revolution!” That effectively dispersed us. I left with Haydée and other compañeros to meet at Melba’s house to discuss the events.

The popular rally, according to its main organizer, had the goal of compelling Batista to agree to a solution acceptable to all the traditional oppositional parties. Although an immense crowd of tens of thousands was brought together, the rally also completely revealed the opposition’s weaknesses and ended up breaking apart. “The opposition is divided,” the tyrant said. We thought—and history confirmed—that it was necessary to “change the platform,” that is, the leaders. And in fact that’s what happened, but at the cost of struggle and blood.

As expected, Batista did not accede to the pressure and summoned Don Cosme to the palace to meet. The latter presented himself to the dictator with the intention of laying down his demands, but he was unable to speak. The big chief of March 10 seduced him with words and treated him “deferentially.” After leaving the presidential mansion, Don Cosme and what he represented were totally finished. José Miró Cardona, who was present at the meeting, told me that the situation was rather embarrassing. Miró Cardona left the meeting ashamed by the way Batista had manipulated the veteran.

What had happened was simply that Don Cosme de la Torriente was representing the bourgeoisie, which could not lead any type of a revolution in Cuba, because it lacked real strength.

After that, no one else was capable of uniting all the traditional opposition parties in a public rally that could confront the Batista government. That event, at which Don Cosme de la Torriente did not want us to play Fidel’s speech, was the swan song of traditional Cuban politics.

There were other political meetings later on, of course, even in the midst of generalized insurrection throughout the country. But they were so servile and submissive to the tyranny that they cannot be properly regarded as opposition.

At Muelle de Luz, the epitaph of the traditional parties was written. Perhaps a commemorative plaque should be erected there to the country’s impotent, mediocre, and subservient bourgeoisie. I have called it “the bourgeoisie that did not exist,” because the United States prevented an independent development of capitalism in Cuba.

From that moment on, the opposition to Batista broke apart forever and remained dependent upon the dictates of the tyranny or the outcome of a true revolution.

[1] Pelayo Cuervo Navarro was brutally murdered by the tyranny’s henchmen on March 13, 1957.

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‘Not etiquette, but revolutionary combat’

Printed below is an excerpt of an article written by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, in preparation for the Second Congress of the Communist International in December 1920. It appears in volume one of *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month in January.

With the outbreak in 1914 of World War I—the first world war between the imperialist powers—the Socialist (Second) International, which over the decades had adopted a strategy of seeking to reform, not overthrow, capitalism, showed it had abandoned a working-class course. In country after country, its member parties supported their respective bourgeoisies in the imperialist war. In October 1917 the Bolshevik party led by V.I. Lenin in Russia, having broken with these opportunist forces, led workers and farmers to take power and then carry out the first socialist revolution in the world. On the basis of that victory and other revolutionary upsurges worldwide, the Bolsheviks initiated the founding of an international, revolutionary working-class organization—the Communist (Third) International, or Comintern—in 1919.

In the excerpt below Trotsky responds to inquiries about membership in the Communist International from the French Socialist Party, one of the first sections of the Second International to cross the class line in 1914 in supporting “its” imperialist ruling class in the war.

French Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin at tricolor SP podium in 1988. SP’s long-standing class-collaborationism is the opposite of the revolutionary course that was a requirement for membership in the Communist International in its early years.

“Adherence to the International is not a matter of fulfilling international etiquette but of undertaking revolutionary fighting tasks,” Trotsky explained. He went on to describe the role of the French Socialist Party as counterrevolutionary and its leaders as “servants of the imperialist war.” Their aim in seeking to join the Third International, he warned, is “a maneuver with the object of further deceiving the toiling masses.”

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BY LEON TROTSKY

Before the French Socialist Party, insofar as it is nowadays raising practically the question of entering the Third International, we must pose completely clear and precise questions, based upon the foregoing considerations. Only forthright and precise answers, confirmed by the “party;” i.e., by the action of its corresponding section, can give a real content to the question of the entry of the French Socialists and their party into the International Communist Organization.

These questions are approximately as follows:

1. Do you recognize as heretofore that it is the duty of a socialist party to advocate national defense with regard to the bourgeois state? Do you consider it permissible to support the French bourgeois republic directly or indirectly in those military clashes with other states which might arise? Do you consider it permissible to vote for war credits either at the present time or in the event of a new world war? Do you reject categorically the treacherous slogan of national defense? Yes or no?

2. Do you consider it permissible for Socialists to participate in a bourgeois government either in peace time or in war? Do you consider it permissible for a Socialist fraction in parliament to support a bourgeois government directly or indirectly? Do you consider it possible to any longer tolerate in the ranks of your party scoundrels who sell their political services to the capitalist government, or to capitalist organizations and the capitalist press, either in the capacity of responsible agents for the thievish League of Nations (Albert Thomas), or as editors of the bourgeois press (A. Varenne), or as attorneys and parliamentary defenders of capitalist interests (Paul Boncour[1]), etc., etc.? Yes or no?

3. In view of the thievish and predatory violence done by French imperialism to a number of weak peoples, especially the backward colonial peoples of Africa and Asia, do you consider it your duty to conduct an irreconcilable struggle against the French bourgeoisie, against its parliament and its army in questions of world spoliation? Do you assume the obligation of supporting, by all available means, this struggle wherever it arises, and—above all—in the form of an open uprising of the oppressed colonial peoples against French imperialism? Yes or no?

4. Do you consider it necessary to immediately launch a systematic and ruthless struggle against official French syndicalism which has entirely oriented itself toward economic conciliationism, class collaboration, patriotism, etc., and which is systematically replacing the struggle for revolutionary expropriation of the capitalists through the proletarian dictatorship by a program of nationalizing railways and mines under the capitalist state? Do you consider it the duty of the Socialist Party—hand in hand with Loriot, Monatte, Rosmer,[2] and others—to initiate an energetic campaign among the working masses in favor of purging the French trade union movement of Jouhaux, Dumoulin, Merrheim[3] and other betrayers of the working class? Yes or no?

5. Do you believe it possible to tolerate in the ranks of the Socialist Party disseminators of passivity who paralyze and drain the revolutionary will of the workers by instilling in them the idea that the “present moment” is unfavorable for their dictatorship? Or, on the contrary, do you consider it your duty to unmask before the working masses that piece of deception according to which the “present moment,” as interpreted by agents of the bourgeoisie, always remains suitable only for the rule of the bourgeoisie? This was so on the day before yesterday—because Europe was then living through a period of mighty industrial boom, which tended to decrease the number of those dissatisfied; it was so yesterday—because the issue was that of national defense; it is so today—because it is necessary to heal the wounds suffered through the heroic feats of national defense; and it will be so on the morrow—because the restorationist work of the bourgeoisie will lead to the provocation of a new war, and together with it will also arise the duty of national defense. Do you consider it the duty of the Socialist Party immediately to undertake a genuine ideological and organizational preparation for a revolutionary assault against bourgeois society, with the object of winning state power as quickly as possible? Yes or no?

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[1] Albert Thomas, French right-wing Socialist Party leader, member of coalition war cabinet, 1914–18. Alexandre Varenne, prominent French Socialist who supported the war. Paul Boncour, typical representative of French intellectual and parliamentary “socialism.”

[2] Leaders of the pre-war socialist and syndicalist movements in France who were won to the Communist International.

[3] Prominent trade union figures from the French anarcho-syndicalist movement.

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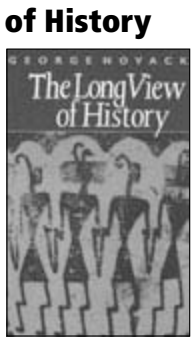

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— GREAT SOCIETY

USA-UK, partners for progress—"Casualty patients may have to spend hours in tents outside busy hospitals under plans approved by the Department of Health. Ambulances have been forced to queue up for up to six hours before patients are admitted, creating an acute shortage of vehicles to respond to new emergencies."—*The Times*, London

Harry Ring

...and also—LONDON—"Schools could be run without teachers in future to help keep government spending under control, according to proposals drawn up by the Department of Education and Skills. Only the head teacher would need a recognized teaching qualification, with pupils taught by a mix of cheaper classroom assistants and temporary agency staff."—*The Times*, London.

Did anyone think otherwise?—"The Pentagon's comptroller said that he saw 'no basis whatsoever' to believe Vice President Dick Cheney's former company deliberately overcharged the Pentagon for oil deliveries to Iraq."—*Los Angeles Times*.

Capitalism at its finest—The Dignity Memorial Network of Arizona presented special deals for Xmas and New Year. One outfit is offering free services (burials extra) for any under 18 in this period, plus anyone of any age who dies accidentally. Another mortuary already has a standing offer to provide free funeral services for (dig this) "public safety personnel killed in the line of duty."

P.S.—To illustrate the above, the *Arizona Daily Star* ran a photo of an $8,495 coffin and captioned it "Die Now and Save."

Scratched his head right—In Sioux City, Iowa, Judge Jeffery Neary said he was just trying to solve a legal riddle by granting a divorce to a same-sex couple. Such matches are illegal in Iowa. The two Iowa women who sought the divorce had been married in Vermont, where same-sex civic unions are recognized.

Popcorn bags?—On last September's cleanup-up day along the California coast, 40,000 volunteers were armed with alleged biodegradable trash bags made from "cornstarch." The state coastal commission says it's trying to get back $23,000 it shelled out for them. Turns out they were old-fashioned non-degradable plastic. (Don't ask us if there actually is a cornstarch bag.)

Great for the kids—A getaway house, in Malibu, a stone's throw from L.A., is up for sale. Features six bedrooms and 10 baths—$20 million, furniture included. And you have backup in fighting for your rights. A community platoon of security guards confronts nutty beach-goers who insist the waterfront is legal public property.

Thousands suspected—Xmas eve, the FBI alerted cops nationwide to keep their eyes peeled for travelers carrying almanacs. These books carry info from abbreviations to weather trends. The feds explain that the widely circulated almanacs can be handbooks for terrorists.

Cleveland city gov't slashes jobs, services

BY DOUG NELSON

CLEVELAND—Hundreds of city workers filled City Council chambers every Monday evening in November protesting proposed layoffs and waiting to get a response from local officials.

On November 24 at 11:00 p.m., the City Council meeting started after workers there waited four hours for council members to adjourn a finance committee meeting. The meeting approved the hundreds of layoffs proposed by Democratic mayor Jane Campbell earlier that day. Campbell said the need to balance a $61 million dollar budget deficit was the reason for the job cuts. Workers there included firefighters, paramedics, and others represented by American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 100 and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 47. There were also dozens of cops, who also face possible layoffs.

Nearly 730 city employees were initially due to be laid off on December 22, but on December 4 the city government laid off 293 workers with two weeks vacation pay—two weeks earlier than previously announced. Taking a tip from Washington's "antiterrorist" campaign, city officials cited concerns over "sabotage" as the reason. Computer networks were shut down for "maintenance" before the announcement and remained down until laid-off workers were gone. In addition to job cuts, all city recycling and leaf pick-up services were eliminated. Hours will also be cut for city recreational centers.

The remaining 434 proposed lay-offs have been delayed by court order. The Cleveland Association of Rescue Employees (CARE) Local 1975 and the Cleveland Firefighters Union Local 93 have been in negotiations with the municipal administration.

The city is pushing for concessions in exchange for a reduction in layoffs from safety workers. "We'll see if the older workers are willing to help the younger guys so they can keep working," Campbell argued.

No cuts for bondholders

The discussion in the finance committee meeting that held up the council members on the night of November 24 shed some light on whose interests the Democratic and Republican politicians serve and what they mean by "budget deficit." When one council member suggested that the city look at borrowing from its "Enterprise Fund," another responded that there were bondholders of several billion dollars who "would have something to say about it." That argument settled the question.

The $61 million deficit refers to the city's General Fund, which pays for municipal services. On the other hand, the Enterprise Fund relates to income-generating ventures. These include two airports, a major water system (the eighth-largest in the country), a power plant, the sewer system, cemeteries, a convention center, golf courses, parking lots, and public markets. Together these business activities make up a substantial percentage of the city's total budget income and are a source of easy profits for wealthy bondholders. According to the 2002 annual financial report for the city of Cleveland, more than $110 million is scheduled next year in interest payments alone to bondholders in various "Enterprise Fund" projects.

Workers in Cleveland have been hard hit by the nationwide economic crisis. In her November 24 speech Campbell said, "Cleveland's workforce has seen an 8 percent job loss from 2000 to 2002. Since January 2001, Cleveland has lost 23 manufacturing companies and a total of 9,482 jobs." From the first quarter of 2001 to the first quarter of 2003, a total of more than 40,000 jobs were lost.

Instead of trying to provide jobs and relief for workers under conditions of rising unemployment, these facts are given as the reason to put more workers out in the cold. Campbell blames the "budget crisis" on the cost of workers' wages and health-care benefits. "When I took office I inherited labor contracts that included an annual 3 percent, 3.5 percent, and 4 percent increases in wages paid to our employees," she complained. "Health-care costs for city workers rose a staggering 29 percent."

One member of SEIU Local 47 at the November 24 City Hall meeting said, "My daughter and I are custodians and she faces being laid off." In addition to the prospect of layoffs, "They have threatened to raise our health-care monthly co-payment from $50 to $200. They want concessions from our unions…. The mayor says we all have to share the pain, but she isn't going to feel any pain."

According to Cedric Johns, president of CARE Local 1975, the city "closed down two out of three hospitals on the east side that have trauma care" in the past few years. Cleveland's east side is predominantly Black and working-class. These neighborhoods are too far from trauma centers to get timely treatment for serious injuries, he noted. The city initially planned to cut 21 EMS jobs and six ambulances, reducing the number of ambulances to 15. "I estimate this would reduce average response time from 6 minutes to 15–20 minutes," said Johns.

Despite the job cuts in the police department, the mayor made it clear this measure would not get in the way of her administration's efforts to use the cops to keep working people in line. "Let me assure you that even after all the cuts are made, the number of police officers per capita in Cleveland will remain higher in Cleveland than all cities in Ohio," she said.

Cleveland cops recently shot an unarmed man in the back four times for a traffic offense in an eastside working-class neighborhood. Stanley Strnad, killed November 15, was the 13th man shot by cops in this city in the last two years.

AP/The Plain Dealer/John Kuntz

Cleveland mayor Jane Campbell speaking at December 18 press conference on job cuts sought by city government.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO

January 19, 1979

Last October, Robert Carter, Robert Hall, and Dunlop Johnson were front-page news in Baltimore—a rare occurrence for steelworkers. They worked at Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point plant.

None lived to see their names in print.

Carter, Hall, and Johnson were three of six steelworkers killed during 1978 at Sparrows Point. Six in one year is a record number of deaths at the Point since the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health unit (MOSH) began counting five years ago.

Cutthroat domestic and international competition is driving steel companies hard to squeeze more profits from fewer workers. "Productivity" is the code word for this profit drive. It means automation; closing older, less efficient facilities. It means new installations built with only minimum safety and health standards

That is what sent more than 4,700 workers—nearly one-third of the plant work force—to the Sparrows Point dispensary in 1978. That is what killed Carter, Hall, and Johnson.

The rash of deaths at Sparrows Point provoked wide discussion among steelworkers. They wanted to know why training is inadequate; why jobs are understaffed; why equipment is left unrepaired; why steelworkers have to pay with their lives and limbs for a job.

President [James] Carter is squarely behind the steel industry's drive for increased productivity. Eliminating safety regulations helps cut corporate costs and fits neatly into the administration's "inflation fighting" plans.

OSHA recently indicated its enthusiasm for the so-called war on inflation by axing 1,000 safety regulations.

January 18, 1954

In a bid to take first place in the witch-hunting pack, President Eisenhower, in his Jan. 7 State of the Union message, demanded an unconstitutional law to strip "subversives" of their citizenship, create a new category of native-born "aliens" in the United States, establish an internal passport system, and give the witch hunt a powerful shove—to help make it the central issue of the 1954 elections as McCarthy has demanded.

Thus ended the first round of the "stop McCarthy" session of the 83rd Congress.

Does it matter that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution clearly prohibits Eisenhower's proposed law? Who among the present members of Congress will dare stick to that objection if the witch-hunt pack begins to howl for its enactment?

The fact is that despite the clear meaning of the 14th Amendment the witch hunters have already taken a considerable number of steps violating the constitutional rights of American citizens. The McCarran Immigration Act already provides for "alienizing" naturalized citizens. Conviction under the Smith "gag" Act already means loss of many citizenship rights, such as the right to vote and hold office. Passports are denied persons suspected of harboring "dangerous thoughts."

It is time for the labor movement to stop listening to liberal prattle about built-in safeguards of American democracy. Eisenhower's proposal to destroy the rights of American citizenship should have been greeted the next morning by a 24-hour general protest strike. But the parasitic slugs of the labor bureaucracy are capable of nothing but deadening the militant reflexes of the rank and file.

CALENDAR

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Support Coal Miners' Strike! The Utah Miners Fight for Dignity and for the Union Sun., Jan. 11, 4:00 p.m. 3029-A Bessemer Road (1/2 mile east of the Alabama State Fair Grounds across from U-Haul). (205) 780-0021. Sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

The War Party, Working-class Resistance, and Building the Communist Movement Speaker: Pete Clifford, Communist League, Fri., Jan. 16, 7:00 p.m., Lothian Trades Union Centre, 26 Albany St. (Off Broughton St.). Tel: 07931-571503.

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EDITORIAL

U.S. blackmail of Iran

The social catastrophe caused by the earthquake that leveled the Iranian city of Bam and killed tens of thousands of its residents calls for genuine solidarity with the people of Iran and urgent material aid with no strings attached. That, however, is the last thing that Washington and other imperialist powers intend to do.

Dripping with hypocrisy about "compassion" and "caring" for the Iranian people, U.S. government officials seized on this disaster as an opportunity to reiterate their demands that Tehran abandon its nuclear program, turn over to Washington anyone deemed to be a member of Al Qaeda, and establish a government that is "democratic"—that is, one that suits the political and economic interests of the U.S. billionaires.

Washington's approach to Iran was recently summed up by White House advisor Richard Perle. "We said that if our efforts with Afghanistan and Iraq were successful, our diplomacy then could be simplified to two words: 'You're next'," Perle said. "The point was not 'we're going to invade you next.' It was 'we're going to turn to you next.' "

"You're next!" That's the brutal message of the imperialist "war on terrorism," the campaign of intensifying military pressures through which Washington seeks to force Iran—as well Syria, Libya, north Korea, and other countries on its hit list—into submitting to its demands.

The U.S. offensive, of course, has nothing to do with democracy, peace, or other professed goals, and everything to do with gaining domination over the oil and other resources of this Middle Eastern nation. The ruling capitalist families in the United States are locked in a sharpening conflict with their imperialist rivals in Paris, Berlin, London, Tokyo and elsewhere over the redivision of the world and its wealth—including Iran and other semicolonial countries—in order to extend the life of their declining empire.

Liberal critics of U.S. policy toward Iran have been wringing their hands over the deadly quake, pointing to the glaring contrast between the massive loss of life in Bam, where the buildings were literally reduced to dust, and the much lower death toll in imperialist countries like Japan that use earthquake-resistant technology. What happened in Iran was a man-made disaster, not a natural one, they note. "What the 'developing world' needs is to develop—and fast," said one British commentator in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

But that's precisely the point: such economic development is impossible while the imperialists continue to dominate the semicolonial world and plunder it through debt slavery and unequal terms of trade backed up by military force. Since the late 19th century the world has been "divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces," as Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin pointed out in 1920. Since then not a single "developing" nation has emerged from that bondage to finance capital, whose every action toward the more economically backward countries is designed to reinforce that dependence. That is how imperialism works.

In contrast with Washington's attempt to blackmail Iran into submission, one nation in the world has set an example of selfless solidarity—revolutionary Cuba. The workers and farmers government in Cuba immediately offered unstinting relief aid to Iran with no strings attached.

What the people of Iran need from Washington is not a scrawny carrot accompanied by a big club. Working people in the United States and worldwide should demand that the U.S. government lift its criminal economic sanctions against Iran, unfreeze Iran's assets abroad, and normalize relations with Tehran. And it should get all its troops out of the Middle East now.

Transformation of U.S. military

Continued from Page 3

Pentagon meeting earlier that month.

The Pentagon is taking steps to simplify its command structure as well. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz asserted in a June 20 speech to the Naval War College's 2003 class that joint operations by the various branches of the armed forces are aimed at developing the "kind of confidence needed to sustain us in the extreme stress of combat." The Pentagon is trying to create a U.S. global military capability in which "individuals and units will receive training and experience in joint operations at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels," he stated. The goal is for the military "to train as we fight—as a coherently integrated team."

As part of this process, the army and air units of the National Guard will consolidate separate state headquarters into a joint command by October 1. "Homeland defense is the National Guard's most important priority," said the Guard's new bureau chief, Lt. Gen. Steven Blum. "Make no mistake about that." This is aimed at bringing the National Guard's structure more in line with the active-duty military, which is being remade, and facilitating its mobilization. "We don't need to be double checked and triple checked every time our troops get activated," stated Maj. Gen. Robert Lee, the Guard's headquarters chief in Hawaii.

Move beyond Europe to the east

The U.S. government has also begun implementing plans to change the military's "footprint"—Pentagon jargon for the stationing of U.S. forces and military bases worldwide.

"In the most sweeping realignment of American military power since World War II, the United States is planning to shift most of its forces from Germany, South Korea, and the Japanese island of Okinawa," said a June 2 MSNBC news report. "The plans, still the focus of intense negotiations and debate among America's allies and inside the Bush administration, would reorient America's presence in Europe eastward to Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, and shift U.S. power in the Far East toward southeast Asia, with options for new bases in northern Australia, the Philippines and even Vietnam being explored."

Washington has also made progress in—and continues to press for—the expansion of the use of North Atlantic Treaty Organization troops. NATO is a U.S.-dominated military alliance that includes imperialist powers primarily in Europe, set up with the goal of containing the Soviet Union. On August 11 NATO took command of the 5,000-strong U.S.-led force occupying Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. "NATO's new role removes the uncertainty of finding a new country to lead the mission every six months," said Philip Reeker, U.S. State Department deputy spokesman that day. This was NATO's first ground mission outside Europe since the alliance was established 54 years ago, consolidating at that time Washington's dominance as the number one military power in Europe.

In mid-October NATO inaugurated its rapid-reaction force of 20,000 well-trained and equipped troops that it says can be deployed anywhere is the world within five days. The NATO Response Force, as it is known, was formed a few days after a meeting of defense ministers of 19 NATO member countries and seven prospective members. Almost half the gathering, hosted by U.S. defense secretary Rumsfeld, was devoted to playing a war game at the Schriever Air Force Base in which NATO troops responded to a "terrorist" threat of a missile-borne chemical attack on a European country.

Following World War II, the international balance of class forces imposed limitations on U.S. imperialism and its allies, forcing Washington to adopt the strategic military course commonly termed the "Cold War." These limitations made impossible for the foreseeable future the use of massive armed forces to accomplish Washington's strategic goal—overturning the Soviet Union and Eastern European workers states and reestablishing capitalism there. Washington was restricted during the Cold War to using its military power to attempt to contain the extension of the socialist revolution. Its strategic effort to weaken those countries where capitalism had been overthrown became one of applying pressure on the ruling bureaucratic castes to police the working class, squelch all political initiatives, and keep working people isolated from the struggles of workers and farmers around the world, with all the depoliticizing and demoralizing consequences that flow from such a separation.

With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989–91 and the prospect for a military assault against those countries less feasible than ever before, imperialism still confronts the same strategic goal but from a weakened position. Instead of waging a "Cold War," it now has to take on and defeat the working class directly to reestablish capitalism in those countries. As a result of losing the Cold War, Washington can no longer rely on Moscow to bring pressure to bear to its advantage anywhere in the world, including Korea.

That is why U.S. troops in south Korea are being redeployed from their main bases in and around Seoul southward, away from the reach of Pyongyang's artillery. Washington is also developing new "low-yield" nuclear weapons, known also as "bunker-busters," for possible strikes in the future to destroy north Korea's nuclear missile capacity.

As Washington has made clear, it intends to go after any government that attempts to develop "weapons of mass destruction." For the same reason, Tokyo is rearming, with U.S. blessing, and building a U.S.-designed "missile-defense shield," to serve as the first line of imperialist assaults in the region, particularly any directed against north Korea and China.

At the same time, the U.S. rulers are deploying forces in Africa to deepen their penetration of the continent, eyeing particularly its oil resources, and negotiating the use of a "family" of military bases across African lands. Likewise, Washington is strengthening its military presence in Latin America.

Along this road, the U.S. ruling billionaire class will come into more and more direct conflict with its capitalist rivals and, above all, with the working class and its allies around the world.

Day laborers

Continued from front page

tina and elsewhere.

A number of Freehold residents and others rallied to the workers' side, angered by the council's discriminatory move. On December 1, nearly 300 day laborers and supporters rallied outside the municipal building to protest the ordinance, then crowded into the council chambers as council members and others debated and heard testimony on the measure.

The majority of those who spoke at the hearing expressed opposition to the ordinance, appealing to councilors to suspend it until an alternative could be found. Supporters of the measure also spoke in its defense. At the end of the meeting councilwoman Sharon Shutzer said that the decision would stand.

"What town in Monmouth County has done more for (the immigrant) community than this town?" said Councilman Kevin Coyne. Freehold can no longer "afford to be so hospitable," he said.

"In some Mexican villages, Freehold is a household word," Coyne complained. "It means a place to find work. We are Democrats, we are all liberals here, but we have to do this."

The ordinance and the protests against it are the latest developments in a polarized situation that has been brewing over the past half-year.

In June 2003, Freehold mayor Michael Wilson launched a "comprehensive quality of life enforcement program," to aggressively "combat the issues that threaten our quality of life." He listed such alleged problems as overcrowding, littering, and housing violations. Additional cops were hired to enforce the program, and a special court was set up to deal with infractions. Day laborers reported that the police stepped up harassment by ticketing those who gather in pursuit of work.

Emboldened by the borough's decisions, a rightist group called PEOPLE (Pressing Our Elected Officials to Protect Our Living Environment), headed by former borough councilman Marc LeVine, reared its head. Its members have called for the arrest and deportation of the day laborers. The group models itself on Sachem Quality of Life, which has waged an aggressive campaign against workers of Mexican and Central American origin who live and work in Long Island, New York.

The workers have refused to be intimidated, however, and have organized a number of meetings to explain their fight to others and assert their rights. Cops and members of PEOPLE have been present at these meetings on occasion.

With the help of the National Day Laborers Organizing Network and the Second Baptist Church in Freehold, these workers have set up a temporary hiring center in the church hall and parking lot, while a more permanent solution is worked out. The hall begun operating January 1, the day the city ordinance went into effect. Days before the hiring hall opened, members of PEOPLE passed out leaflets in the neighborhood, informing residents that an "illegal alien hiring site" would be operating nearby.

On December 30 some 300 workers and others participated in a meeting to prepare for the opening of the hiring hall.

With the backing of the organizing network and the Monmouth County Residents for Immigrant Rights, representatives of the workers filed a class action suit December 30 against the town's mayor in a federal court in Trenton, New Jersey, charging violation of their constitutional rights.

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Pathfinder books draw interest at Mexico fair

BY BETSEY STONE

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—"I'm really surprised and happy to see these books and to talk with people from the United States who are socialists," said Alfredo Rodríguez to volunteers staffing the Pathfinder Press booth at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, held here November 27–December 5.

Like many among the thousands who stopped by the booth to read, discuss, and purchase books, Rodríguez was keenly interested in learning about an important part of U.S. politics that he had not yet been exposed to: the reality of labor resistance and solidarity among working people in the United States in response to the offensive of the bosses and their government.

A photo display showing the strike picket line and food distribution efforts of workers at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, who are fighting to win recognition of their union, the United Mine Workers of America, caught the attention of many. "I never knew there were struggles like this in the United States," said high school student Alejandro Estrada. "It's exciting. It gives us hope."

Pathfinder's range of books about the U.S. class struggle, along with those carrying the writings and speeches of leaders of the Cuban Revolution, figured strongly among the 541 titles sold during the nine days of the fair. Fifty people bought copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and *Capitalism's World Disorder*, also by Barnes, were popular as well.

Held annually in Mexico's second largest city, the Guadalajara Book Fair is the largest such event in the Spanish-speaking world. This year close to 1,500 publishers and distributors from 38 countries filled the city's giant Expo hall. Over 440,000 people visited the fair, including thousands of elementary and high school students.

Three days were set aside during the fair for those involved in the book trade to carry out business. Volunteers at the Pathfinder booth took advantage of this time to inform bookstore representatives, book distributors, and librarians about the 350 titles in the publisher's catalog and its web site, www.pathfinderpress.com.

The Pathfinder volunteers, who came from a number of cities in the United States and Canada, were kept busy by a constant stream of inquiries about the books and pamphlets on display.

One of these volunteers, Nicole Sarmiento, a student from Miami and a Young Socialist, said that many of the youth she spoke with were "drawn to books with the speeches of revolutionaries like Che Guevara, Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, and Leon Trotsky," as well as books giving scientific explanations about class society, such as those by Evelyn Reed on the origins of women's oppression. Most had never seen books on socialism before, she noted.

Militant photos by Betsey Stone

Pathfinder booth drew crowds at Guadalajara book fair

"They would stay for hours to talk, read, and learn. Many would ask if we could hold the books while they went to borrow money, or pool money with friends. And they did come back."

The books purchased were on a wide variety of topics. A student who had recently visited Israel bought five books on the Middle East. After reading the pamphlet, *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*, he returned for further discussion.

Many stopped to read the poster advertising "The Opening Guns of World War III, Washington's Assault on Iraq," the lead article in the third issue of the Spanish-language Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*. Sandra Torres, a teacher at a local technical college and one of the 18 people who purchased a copy, said, "I've felt for a long time that imperialism is still playing a role in the world, but I need to learn more about how it works." Torres also bought the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and returned twice during the fair to discuss, read, and buy books.

Resistance to government attacks

The fair opened one day after a large march in Mexico City, where more than 100,000 workers and farmers protested a plan pushed by Mexican president Vicente Fox to further open the energy industry to capitalist investors and to place a highly regressive tax on food, medicine, and books.

The nationwide protest, which included rallies in Guadalajara, Monterrey, and other cities, was fueled by Mexico's continuing economic crisis, rising unemployment, and poverty rate of 45 percent nationwide.

Articles in the Mexican press during the fair illustrated the continuing efforts by the capitalist government here to shift further the burden of the economic crisis on working people. An example was the debate over the minimum wage, which the government set at 44 pesos per day, today the equivalent of $3.85. Since 1993 the purchasing power of those receiving this wage has dropped by half. Union officials are demanding the wage be raised 10 percent in 2004 to make up for some of this loss. Mexican employers, arguing falsely that a higher wage raise will increase inflation, are for keeping it at between 3 and 4 percent.

"You can't live on this," a taxi driver commented in a conversation with some of the Pathfinder booth volunteers. "Not unless you have three or four people in a household working, or two or three families crowded into an apartment to pay the rent."

One of the programs at the fair that sparked controversy was a "Conference on Border Studies," which took up the increased immigration to the United States that has resulted from the conditions of imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation. Marco Pablo Moloeznick, a University of Guadalajara professor, argued for increasing the police presence on Mexico's borders and the cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments to tighten their borders in the name of fighting "terrorism."

A number of those in attendance expressed disagreement with this view after the program. Many said they were angered by the brutality of the U.S. immigration cops on the Mexico-U.S. border and opposed the increased use of the Mexican armed forces on the southern border to attack, seize, and deport workers entering Mexico from other countries in Central America.

Interest in Cuban Revolution

Books published in Cuba were the subject of two panel discussions. Cuban author and journalist Rosa Miriam Elizalde was on hand to talk about *Los Disidentes,* which she co-authored with Luis Báez, author of *Secretos de los Generales* and other Cuban titles. The book includes interviews with Cuban intelligence agents who penetrated the counterrevolutionary groups, which have been christened by U.S. officials as the "dissidents." The interviews, along with photos, letters, and other documents, give a detailed picture of the role of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana in helping to organize the counterrevolutionary organizations in Cuba.

Arleen Rodríguez, editor of the Cuban magazine *Tricontinental*, and columnist Lázaro Barredo, a writer for the Cuban trade union newspaper *Trabajadores*, discussed their jointly authored book, *El Camaján*, which focuses on the record of Elizardo Sánchez, one of the opponents of the Cuban Revolution who live on the island and receive backing from Washington.

Many new titles, including novels, poetry, and books on Cuban history, were on display at a sizable stand occupied by Cuban publishing houses. The books, as well as the CDs and videos depicting Cuban culture and history, attracted large, youthful crowds.

Some 500 people, mostly high school students organized to come by their teachers, attended a presentation at the fair by Paco Ignacio Taibo, a Spanish-born novelist who lives in Mexico, on his 1997 book, *Ernesto Guevara, Also Known as Che.* In his brief talk, Taibo avoided mention of Guevara's record as a leader of the Cuban Revolution, including its internationalist missions in Africa and Bolivia. He focused instead on a purported description of Che's personality, describing the revolutionary as "the greatest romantic of the 20th century."

Pathfinder volunteers invited a number of individuals to set the record straight by visiting the booth to read Guevara's own writings on the revolution and the liberation struggles in Africa and Latin American that he was part of.

Fairgoers purchased more books on the Cuban Revolution at the booth than on any other topic. More than 70 bought *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, the biggest seller. Almost as popular was *Marianas in Combat,* the story of Brig. Gen. Teté Puebla, the highest ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. The photos of Puebla and other women who joined the Rebel Army in the 1950s to fight the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista often clinched the sale.

LETTERS

A nonviolent revolution?

Thank you for your voice and insight in reporting the news and issues as you have in the past several weeks of my first subscription. Already, I can't imagine myself having as informed a world view without your publication.

I also appreciate your willingness to answer in such detail questions from our readers. That is a hallmark of your focus on grassroots organizing and your emphasis on speaking to the people where they are. Thank you.

I was wondering if you would be willing to discuss the potential for nonviolence in revolution. It seems to me that in order to serve truly revolutionary ends, we might need to employ truly revolutionary means, something I assume might take the shape of a massive, organized, nonviolent, non-cooperative popular movement.

In my short relationship with the *Militant* I haven't read much that refers to actual means of revolution in theoretical terms. I am excited, however, to see the practical methods like union organization, striking, and international diplomacy in bodies like the UN and others taking a spotlight. Perhaps my ultimate question could be summed up in, "What shape will the Revolution take?" At least, what shape would you like it to take?

Thank you for your kind consideration of this issue, and for all your hard work at the *Militant*. I enjoy reading it.

C.S.
Seattle, Washington

Want more about Russia

I would like to read analyses of the events in Russia. Why has Putin arrested some of these "oligarchs"? What class owns the means of production? Is there a struggle over this question? What happened to the monopoly over foreign trade, oil, manufacturing, etc.?

In short, what's going on? I've seen nothing in the *Militant*, and the *New York Times* is not really very helpful on this.

Chuck Cairns
New York, New York

Antiwar movement

I am totally flabbergasted by your attitude toward the war in Iraq. Your paper has been badmouthing the antiwar movement, American and European, before and after the beginning of this war.

It has spoken in glowing terms of possible democratic prospects in the area, due to Bush's intervention (Saudi Arabia). It speaks about French and German "lucrative" deals with Iraq as if this is a reason not to get involved in any interimperialist controversy. One can suppose that any commerce between nations that involves lucre is imperialist even if neither France nor Germany have killed or destroyed in Iraq as the U.S. has done.

It currently discusses the nature of the resistance in Iraq as being not quite what is desirable, or that it is not believable. The paper consistently fails to tell working people what to say or do about this war.

It is time that it come clean and do as any communist paper is supposed to do. I want to hear your advice for fighting imperialism. So far the *Militant's* advice in this respect has been to recount tales of courage in the Sierra Maestra 50 years ago, but I don't think it recommends to follow that example at this time.

In short, it seems to me that this abstentionism is the result of sectarianism on the part of the leaders of your party.

Sante Camo
Kendall Park, New Jersey

Sources on Iraq resistance

I wish to respond to a reply to a reader column called "What's the nature of the Iraqi resistance." I would like to state that the sources for what I understand to be the situation in Iraq are broad and varied, and include the website Al-Jazeera in English and several Iraqis I know.

What I understand is that the civic space you refer to is very limited, but nevertheless there are Shia clerics who have stated their opposition to the occupation. Some have called for restraint, some have, with bodyguards surrounding them, engaged U.S. coalition forces. I regret I do not have the exact details of this, but some of these instances were even reported in the "mainstream" media.

Although this is not a massive uprising, I feel this to have some significance. There have been public demonstrations of a somewhat peaceful nature against the occupation called for by Shia clerics in and around Baghdad, so perhaps there is, albeit within limits, a certain amount of a revolutionary approach to this situation. I would like to hear your thoughts on this. All of the Iraqis I know here in Houston hate Saddam and hate the occupation. With no revolutionary leadership, the majority of Iraqis may not be engaged in armed conflict, but, from what I have seen on Al-Jazeera I don't think they have any love for the invasion and occupation either. I am not stating that I disagree totally with the article, nor do I think, though, that there is no resistance outside of the Baathist thugs.

David Perry
Houston, Texas

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

THE MILITANT

Italy: Parmalat fall deepens bosses' crisis

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The collapse of the Italian dairy empire Parmalat in the closing weeks of 2003 has deepened the crisis facing the biggest capitalist families in Italy, whose economy has been in recession for at least the past six months. Parmalat had been touted by the Italian rulers as a signal success story, able to compete on international markets with the likes of Nestlé and Kraft. Its fall came in a matter of weeks, however, after its directors admitted they had claimed billions of dollars in fake assets to offset their massive debts.

Parmalat, which purchases some 8 percent of the country's milk production, is the largest Italian food company. Its collapse jeopardizes tens of thousands of workers' jobs, spread around the world, as well as the livelihood of dairy farmers in Italy and Brazil.

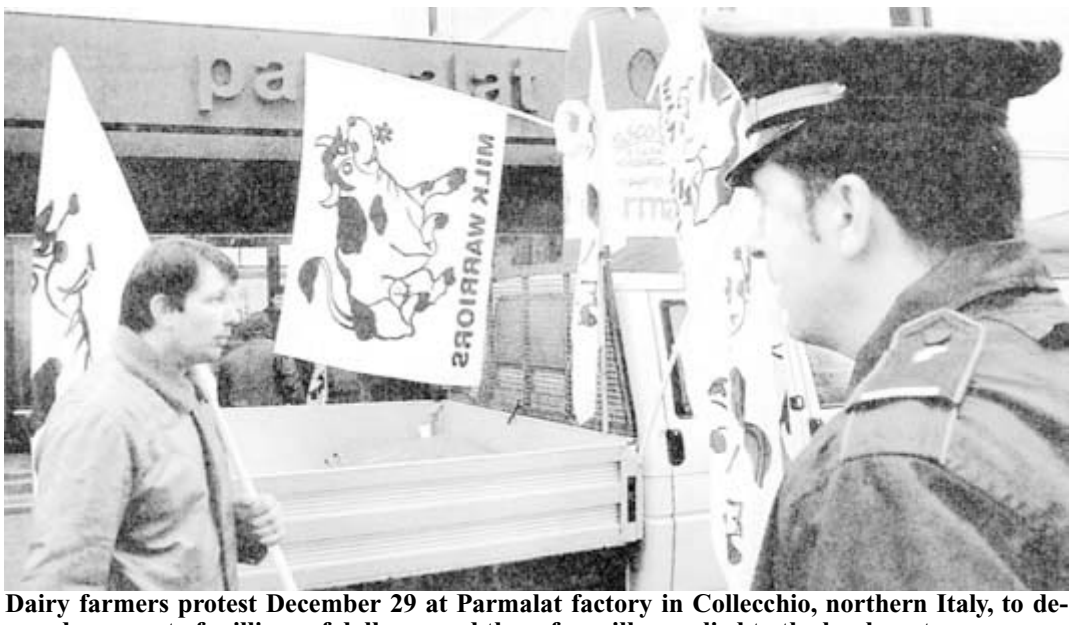
Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said December 21 the government would "intervene to bail out the company and save jobs." The cabinet promptly appointed a regulator to put together a "rescue" plan, and amended laws to shield the company from creditors' demands for debt repayments. Berlusconi's government also appealed to Brussels-based administrators of the European Union, which is dominated by Paris and Berlin, to waive EU restrictions on state aid to insolvent companies.

On December 19, directors of the stock exchange in Rome suspended trading in Parmalat shares, which had declined in value by $1.5 billion euros. Eight days later the company was declared insolvent by a court in the northern city of Parma, its home base. Parmalat's total losses are estimated to be as high as $16.2 billion.

Among those owed money are dairy farmers across Italy, who say they have not received $157 million in payments for milk and other dairy products. Farmers in the town of Collecchio, where the Tanzi family that dominates Parmalat got its start, picketed the local factory in late December to demand payment.

The tremors from the food giant's financial cave-in are not confined to Italy. Parmalat employs some 36,400 people in 30 countries, including 4,000 in Italy itself. In the four decades in which it has operated, the company has carved out a big slice of the dairy market in Brazil and several other semicolonial Latin American countries, and has been a competitor in the imperialist economies of the United States, Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and elsewhere.

Eight company executives and advisors are now in jail or being sought by the Italian police. In the United States the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filed suit against it December 29. According to the *Washington Post*, the SEC accused Parmalat of inducing investors in the United States to buy more than $1.5 billion worth of bonds and other securities, while undertaking—in the government agency's words—"one of the largest and most brazen corporate financial frauds in history."



Dairy farmers protest December 29 at Parmalat factory in Collecchio, northern Italy, to demand payment of millions of dollars owed them for milk supplied to the bankrupt company.

U.S. banks under scrutiny

The SEC has also announced that it is looking into dealings by U.S. banks, including Bank of America and Citigroup, with the insolvent company. An attempt by Parmalat's directors to pass off a pasted-together fax with Bank of America letterhead as authority for almost $5 billion worth of nonexistent assets in the Cayman Islands helped to expose the fictitious character of much of the company's claimed holdings. Bank of America reported the apparent fraud in December.

Such crude methods were not unusual according to investigators, reported the *Wall Street Journal* December 31. "Over the course of years," it stated, "documents were poorly forged on a scanner then run through a fax machine to make them look authentic. Signatures, they add, were lifted from old letters and copied onto new ones, and official stamps tampered with. Then four times a year, when quarterly results were due, they say financial accounts and transactions were inflated."

The *Journal* contrasted the Italian firm's "cut and paste forgery" with what it claimed were the "sophisticated financing vehicles and partnerships" used to similar ends by the American energy company Enron, which crashed amid similar scandals in 2002.

Whatever the difference in methods, however, the stripping away of both companies' false assets was tied to broader economic problems, including the decline in the stock markets worldwide and the deeper economic crisis in key Third World markets.

Parmalat's founder, Calisto Tanzi, one of those jailed, told investigators that he and his cohorts were prompted to conceal Parmalat's problems after it was hit by losses at its huge operations in South America. According to the December 31 *New York Times*, an investigating judge said Tanzi had described "adjustments to the balance sheet" as necessary "to overcome crisis situations which, beginning in about 1998, were caused above all by the South American market and, last year, by the exchange rate situation with respect to Brazil and Argentina."

The government of Brazil, where Parmalat operates nine plants, devalued the country's currency in January 1999—a step that was followed in late 2001 by the near-collapse of the Argentina economy, including a de facto default on payments on the country's foreign debt. Parmalat's other Latin American holdings include facilities in Ecuador and Venezuela, where its chief honcho is being sought by police.

Crisis of Italian capitalism

The Tanzis are a prominent ruling-class family in Italy. Calisto Tanzi cultivated an image as a patron of Parma's Catholic Church, music, and owner of the city's soccer club—a lucrative business venture in its own right, now likely to be placed on the auction block along with other assets. He also built close links with the Christian Democratic Party, which ruled the country for decades until it fell apart in the 1990s under the impact of the growing economic crisis and social polarization.

In a December 30 article the *New York Times* noted that the company's collapse, along with the continued decline of the Fiat auto company and other major firms, spelled bad news for the ability of Italian capitalists to "compete in the global market." It cited a U.S. Chamber of Commerce survey showing that Italy, Europe's third biggest economy, attracts only 2 percent of total investment abroad from the United States—one-fifth the level of the Netherlands and one-tenth that of the United Kingdom.

"The fall of the Tanzi family sends a clear signal of the need for the reform of family-controlled capitalism," said Alberto Carneval Maffé, a professor at the Bocconi University Business School in Milan, approvingly quoted by the *Times*. The control of major corporations by superwealthy families, however, far from being unique to Italy, is the way capitalism works everywhere, with the *New York Times* itself—owned by the Ochs-Sulzberger family—being a case in point.

What irks the U.S. rulers is not this reality of capitalism, but the fact that the working-class resistance in Italy to the bosses' efforts to roll back social rights won by working people—as well as the protectionist measures imposed by the Italian capitalists—raises the overhead costs of U.S. investment in the Italian economy.

The Berlusconi government's attempts to cut further into workers' social wage—especially retirement benefits—have sparked protests by the major trade union federations. Resistance has been sparked by other attacks as well. In mid-2003 tens of thousands of airline and health-care workers carried out stoppages to protest layoffs and contract takebacks by the bosses.

The Confederation of Workers Unions has announced a series of strikes for mid-January. "Ten thousand workers of the Customs offices, 45,000 workers of the fiscal agencies and 33,000 firemen will strike for eight hours," stated the Italian news agency AGI January 2. These workers have been awaiting the renewal of their contracts for two years, it reported.

Bay Area unionists rally for grocery workers

BY LAURA ANDERSON

SAN FRANCISCO—More than 200 people rallied here December 20 in the parking lot of the Safeway store at Church and Market in support of unionists in Southern California engaged in a fight with several major grocery chains.

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Carpenters Union, Service Employees International Union, and the Teamsters union joined the action in solidarity with the striking and locked-out workers, who are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW).

Ten days earlier Safeway strikers from Los Angeles had joined a spirited crowd of 1,000 people at San Francisco's Union Square for a rally organized by the AFL-CIO and Jobs with Justice, a coalition of labor and community organizations. The action marked UN Human Rights Day. The strikers led the crowd in chants of "Don't shop at Safeway!"

At the time of the rally some 70,000 workers in Los Angeles and surrounding areas had been on strike or locked out for two months—a battle that is gaining solidarity in this Northern California city.

Fighting against health-care cuts

The fight began October 11, when UFCW members in Los Angeles rejected the takeback contract offer put forward by the Vons and Pavilions grocery stores, both of which are owned by Safeway Inc. The following day the bosses at Ralphs stores—owned by Krogers—and Albertsons made common cause with the Safeway bosses by locking out their workforce. All the striking and locked-out workers are covered by the same contract.

Workers visiting San Francisco to build solidarity with their strike explain that the companies' contract proposal includes a number of direct attacks. The bosses propose no wage increases until October 2005, big cuts in health benefits, and union-weakening changes in work rules. They also demand the right to outsource work to nonunion companies.

Since the beginning of November striking grocery workers have set up pickets seven days a week at four Safeway store locations in San Francisco, and at many others throughout the Bay Area. Striking and locked-out workers arrive every two weeks from Los Angeles to reinforce these picket lines.

"When we were kids my parents would never buy grapes when the farm workers were fighting for their rights," one of the pickets told the *Militant*. She was referring to the strikes and consumer boycotts in the 1960s organized by immigrant farm workers during their fight to build a union and wrest contracts off California grape and lettuce growers.

As the worker spoke, a woman passing by assured the strikers that she would honor their picket line. "I'm just going to Wells Fargo," she said. "I won't shop at Safeway."

Workers identify the bosses' drive to make them pay more for health coverage as the central issue in the dispute. Speaking at a December 12 Militant Labor Forum on the fight, picket captain Helen Holgun said, "The company wants us to pay without a cap so it could be $20 this week and $40–$50 the next one, with workers at their mercy. They want a two-tier system of wages and benefits for new hires, which will create a lot of friction. New hires would have to wait 37 months before receiving health benefits."

Isidro Núñez, who has worked for Vons for 13 years, also spoke at the meeting. "I left my family in Los Angeles to fight for health care for them," he said. "Our last strike was 25 years ago. Many of us won't have medical insurance as of December 31. But we're 70,000 strong in Southern California and this will set an example for others. It's corporate greed versus human need.

"We hope this doesn't happen to San Francisco come July when the contracts are up here. We need to stick together, stay united," he said.

The strikers have won increasing support from other unions. Carlos Serrano, a striker who has worked at Vons for 25 years, told the forum that teachers union members in Pasadena and Los Angeles area help staff the picket lines on their weekend days off.

"I have seven family members in the industry," said Serrano. "One crossed the line. I'll never cross the line."

He reported that of the 98 workers at the Vons store in the Southern California city of Glendale, where he works, only two have crossed.